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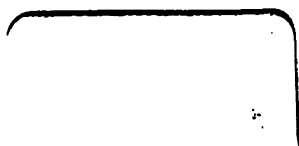
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QUITE ALONE.

BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON :

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QUITE ALONE.

CHAPTER I.

LILY IS REGALED ON WHITEBAIT.

A BURST of laughter broke from a balcony overhead as Lily and her protectress entered the large handsome mansion ; and the child, looking upward, could see a number of gentlemen congregated outside, who were leaning over the railings, and were very grandly dressed, and appeared to be enjoying themselves very much.

“By Jove!” cried one of the gentlemen—but this Lily could not hear—“she’s come!”

“And brought the little one with her, too. She said she would ; for propriety’s sake.”

“I wonder whether she will oblige us with a

rapid act of horsemanship round the room, after dinner."

"It's more likely that she will fly into one of her passions, and fling the water souché, plates and all, at the waiters' heads."

"Or at us."


"I've seen her do something very nearly approaching that. Once, at the Star and Garter, she grew jealous of somebody, and tried to strangle herself with a table napkin."

"Pretty little thing, the girl."

"Her daughter, possibly. Tigresses have cubs, sometimes."

"Hush! here's the tigress herself.—Countess, how delighted we all are to see you!"

The Countess and Lily were received at the door of the mansion which smelt so strongly of warm fish, by a stout gentleman in a blue coat and buff waistcoat, whose chief aim and end in life appeared to be to show to every visitor how white, smooth, and polished, the centre of his bald head was, and how perfectly joined the sutures of his skull were. He was continually bowing at, not to, the visitors of the establishment of which he was the respected landlord—he has been dead many years, and his name, I beg to observe, was neither Hart nor Quartermaine—and he butted at you, so to speak, with his baldness, like an affable albino. The pacific nature of his mission



was manifested by the snowy flag of truce which he continually waved. This flag was not precisely a napkin—that would have been too much like a waiter; nor a pocket-handkerchief—that would have been too much like a dandy; but a combination of the two: a cross between cambric and damask. But he ever waved it in peace and amity, as though to say, “Be not afeard. This is the habitation of fish and of felicity. Let no cares sit behind your chairs. I know all my customers and respect them. If you do not choose to pay the bill on the spot, you can send me down a cheque by the post, or by your body-servant, at your convenience: only, don’t dispute my charges, for that would hurt my feelings. This is not a vulgar cook-shop. Last week I entertained his Majesty’s ministers. We don’t want common people here. Let them go up the town, towards the Park, and have tea and shrimps for ninepence. Here, we desire the attendance of the superior classes only. Walk in, walk in, ladies and gentlemen. This is feeding time; and the bait is in excellent condition.”

If a trader resolutely make up his mind definitively to address himself to the “superior classes,” and if he carry out his intent with tact and nerve, he shall scarcely fail, I take it, to achieve success. The superior classes reward that tailor who boldly says, “Let others vaunt their sixteen-shilling garments: no puff of mine shall ever claim insertion

in the columns of the press, and I will go on charging seven pounds ten shillings for a frock-coat." There are people who like to be mulct for wax candles at an hotel, and who would think it derogatory to their dignity to pay less than seven-and-sixpence for a fried sole and a mutton-chop. Yes, there are persons who are uncomfortable unless they are overcharged. Dearnness has a kind of affinity with high Toryism, and others of our glorious institutions. Cheapness is democratic; cheapness is levelling. I have always been of opinion that a daily newspaper printed on cream-laid bank post, hot pressed, gilt-edged, and sold at the rate of half-a-crown a number, would be a success. It might have but a small circulation, but it would pay, and it would be read by the superior classes by the light of three-and-sixpenny wax-candles, after seven-and-sixpenny dinners, and while sipping port at fourteen shillings a bottle.

The validity or otherwise of this hypothesis is no excuse, however, for keeping a number of very hungry people waiting for their dinner. The lady passed the bald-headed landlord with a stately inclination of the head. The landlord called out in a rich, but subdued voice—a voice like iced Moselle—"Show the Benbow!" An obsequious waiter, with curved red whiskers, very like the claws of a lobster, conducted the guests up the softly carpeted

staircase, and handed them over to the mistress of the robes, a buxom chambermaid.

As the lady, deftly unshawled, but still keeping on her bonnet, swept towards the Benbow, preceded by another waiter, the buxom chambermaid, who had just taken off Lily's hat, and fluttered a brush over her brown curls, stooped down and kissed the child.

"Poor little innocent darling," she whispered. "Is that your mamma, my darling?"

"I don't know," answered the child, looking up to the face of her querist with a very trustful look, for by the young woman's voice she was kind and honest.

"Poor little thing," the chambermaid continued, "what does this pet know about devilled bait? Why, they'd burn her tongue out! Don't you eat no devil, my dear."

Lily gazed at her with blank surprise. She had heard—what child has not?—of the devil, and had been warned to avoid him and all his works; but she had never been counselled not to eat him.

"Nor yet don't you take no punch, nor no sauce pickang," went on the chambermaid. "There, go along, dear, your ma's calling you."

"It's a shame to bring children here," the buxom chambermaid subsequently remarked to the waiter with the lobster-claw whiskers. "It can't do 'em no good, and it's enough to ruin their little stomachs."

I don't mind the Eton boys that come here with their pas, and always manage to get tipsy unbeknown, and nearly dash their young brains out a trying monkey tricks outside the balcony, and then race up and down stairs like mad. I don't mind *them*. Mischief they're born to, and mischief they're bred to. But what does that Frenchwoman want here with that little bit of a thing! I don't believe she's her ma. She's been here four or five times this season. Last time she brought an old Frenchwoman who spilt snuff into her salmon cutlets, and got tipsy half an hour before the ducks came up. My belief, William, is, that she's nothing better than a play-actress."

Another groom of the chambers threw open the Benbow, a pretty saloon overlooking the river, and announced the new arrivals.

He was a waiter with very light dun-coloured hair and a pale pasty face. He was warm in appearance, but not moist; the rather, crisp. It was scarcely an unnatural fancy to imagine that he had been fried in batter, and that, although now a waiter, he had, according to the (not then broached) Theory of Development, sprung from a whitebait.

Have you never observed how very like fish the waiters at Greenwich are? There is the John Dory waiter; the miller's thumb waiter, plump and plethoric; the whitebait waiter; the eel waiter, who wriggles very much as he waits.

A group of gentlemen advanced to meet the lady and her little client. They received her with many bows and more smiles. Lily was not at all frightened of them, for though so very grandly dressed they were all very kind and friendly to her. There was a large old gentleman with an embossed velvet waistcoat, and a great gold chain meandering over it, and a beautiful fringe of white whisker round his purple face. He had a fine hook nose, very prominent and very deeply coloured, and to Lily he looked like a splendid Punch. She had seen Punch, once or twice, by sly peeps from the windows of Rhododendron House, and had woven a child-legion about him that he and the Little Hunchback, and the porter who boxed the Barmecide's ears, were brothers. This old gentleman his companions addressed, but without much restraint, as Marquis. He had a loud voice, and often addressed the Countess in that which was an unknown tongue to Lily. There were two or three gentlemen equally splendid, but younger, who were addressed indifferently as Tom, Dick, and Harry, whichever you please; and there was a spiteful-looking gentleman with very big black whiskers, which looked as though they had not been originally sable, but had acquired that hue by means of some artful pigment. This gentleman wore a high black stock, and a coat buttoned up to his chin, and his trousers were strapped very tightly over his boots; to the heels of which boots, Lily saw

something long and bright attached, with a spiky star at the end of each.

Finally, there was a very tall gentleman—a painfully tall gentleman, for there seemed no end to his legs—who kept a little apart from the others, and did not laugh so loud as they did. He had a long face, very thin and pale, and a good deal of beautiful black hair thrown back from his forehead. His hands, as Lily soon knew, were very small and thin, you could almost see through them. His clothes seemed to fit him very loosely, and when he spoke he lisped.

He was the last of the gentlemen who made friends with Lily, but she liked him the best. He drew her towards him while the men were bestowing compliments on the handsome lady, and, parting her curls, printed a very soft kiss on her forehead. Not one of the other gentlemen had done that. Had they touched her, Lily would have blushed, and her little temper would have risen, and she would have cried “Don’t.” But she did not reject the thin pale gentleman.

“And so your mamma has brought you to dine with us, little one,” he said, looking in her clear eyes.

The handsome lady was her mamma. This was news to Lily. She did not reply directly to his question, but began to chatter on what a pretty place it was, and how beautiful all that glass looked on the table.

"Ay, ay," returned the pale tall gentleman, nodding his head, "there are plenty of pretty things here, and prettier things to put into them. Are you fond of pretty things?"

"Oh! I love them so dearly," the child cried, joining her small palms together. And then she began to tell him about the spider on the wall, and a squirrel that belonged to Miss Furbrow, and Miss Dallwallah's golden earrings, and a great doll with a blue satin frock and pink shoes and a sash, which Miss Babby had once shown her, and which had belonged to Miss Kneecrops, the poor girl who died before Lily came to school.

"You are a strange child," the tall gentleman said. "What's your name?"

"Lily Floris."

"The rose by any other name would smell as sweet. And how old are you, dear?"

"Nearly eight," quoth Lily; "and what's your name, sir?"

"Tom Jones," replied the gentleman.

"No it isn't," pursued Lily, shaking her head; "it's something much prettier than that. Do tell me, or I won't talk to you any more."

"Well," replied the gentleman, smiling, "my name's Long."

"Long what?"

"You little inquisitor! My christian name is William, and people call me Sir William Long. At school, they used to nickname me Long Billy."

"And how old are you? I should so like to know."

"I am twenty-eight."

"Then you're just twenty years older than I am. How nice! Are you married?"

"No," gravely answered the tall gentleman who said his name was Sir William Long. I am Quite Alone."

"And so am I," quoth Lily, laughing. "All the girls told me so. I have always been Quite Alone till to-day. May I sit with you at dinner?"

Sir William was about to give a smiling affirmative to the naïve question, when the Countess—the handsome lady—who had been watching this little by-play from afar off, addressed the tall gentleman by the name of Good-for-nothing, and asked him how long he intended to keep them waiting?

"I have been flirting with your little girl," he said, as he placed the child beside him.

Lily did not know anything about flirting; but she knew the tall gentleman had been very kind to her, and she liked very much to sit near him.

"Flirting!" exclaimed the Countess, scornfully. "You begin early. You had better teach the little one her A B C: she scarcely knows it."

"She'll get on fast enough if you take her away from school and teach her yourself," the old gentleman, who was a marquis, remarked, with a bow.

"When I want her to learn wickedness she shall come to you," retorted the lady. "Please to give me some souché; and, Sir William, I entreat you not to let that unhappy child eat too much."

The lady brightened up more and more after each course, and when the sparkling wines were passed about, was quite radiant.

"I like this Greenwich," she said, holding a brimming glass of Moselle to the light; "it does me good. It makes me breathe. Give me Greenwich and Richmond, and you may sink the rest of your sad England to the bottom of your muddy Thames. How good these little fishes are! How crisp they eat! Good-for-nothings, I drink to you." The lady was enjoying herself.

The dinner was a very grand one; but, with all its grandeur, piscine culinary art has progressed since those days, and by the side of a Greenwich banquet as we now understand it, the repast might have seemed mean. Still, there was an almost inconceivable variety of fish. Still, rare wines came up with every course. The glass and damask would have appeared paltry in comparison with the sumptuosities of crystal and napery which are now displayed at such feasts, but it was a dinner fit for a king, and one Lily settled in her own mind of the precise description partaken of every day by the Caliph Haroun Alraschid. She fancied Giaffar calling for more salmon cutlets, and eating a devilled bait with his fingers. And then, the bait

themselves became the fish that turned in the pan and reproached the cook in the Fisherman and the Geni. And the pasty-faced waiters were black slaves with jewelled collars and armlets, and the rare wines were sherbet cooled with snow, and the child ate her dinner in a dream.

Sir William Long was faithful to his trust, and took the most sedulous care of her. He gave her some nice fried sole, and warned off the waiters who would have approached her with perilous preparations of salmon and stewed eels. He bade the man bring him some Seltzer-water, and gave Lily a modest glass of the beverage mingled with champagne. He gave her some whitebait, which, with the thin brown bread-and-butter, she thought delicious, but he made her eschew the condimental cayenne pepper and lemon. He watched over her with a careful tenderness, very curious to behold, and, though he drank fearfully long draughts of the rare wines, he took little more solid food than Lily herself.

“You must be very thirsty!” the child said, simply, as he drained another bumper of claret-cup.

“I am always thirsty.”

“How funny! Why don’t you drink tea, or go to the pump?—unless, of course, you are hot. Miss Babby will never let us go to the pump when we are hot. Miss Furblow begged a jug of water from the cook once, when we had come in from a

long walk, and broke out, two hours afterwards, in a—O so dreadful rash. Mrs. Bunycastle said it was a judgment upon her.”

“I dare say it was. My being always thirsty is a judgment, I suppose, on me. I drink because I am alone, and because I am ill.”

“Ill! You look very well, only you are so tall. Have you got a cold?”

“Much worse than that. I am in a consumption.”

“What is that? I never heard of that.”

“Fancy, for aught I know,” the tall gentleman replied.

“What do you do all day? Have you any holidays?”

“A great deal too many, my darling. It is always holiday-time with me, and a dreadfully dreary time it is.”

“Then you don’t learn any lessons?”

“I have learnt some that have cost me very dear.”

“Are you good?”

“Not the least bit in the world, dear; I am very bad.”

“How dreadful. Everybody ought to be good. Miss Babby says so.”

“And who is Miss Babby?”

“One of my governesses. The one who is so kind to me. You ought to be good, you know,

because then the angels will love you. We had a missionary-box at our school. Have you got a missionary-box?"

"I'm afraid I haven't got such a thing."

"But you go to church?"

"I am ashamed to say I don't. Do you?"

"Yes; but only this last half. I am growing a great girl, you know," and Lily drew herself up proudly. "And then all the big girls begged for me, and promised Miss Babby that I should be very good and quiet."

"And you like going to church?"

"Oh! it's so nice. They sing so beautifully. But I don't like the Litany, it is so long, and always the same thing."

"And the sermon?"

Lily blushed. "Miss Babby scolded me for going to sleep all through the sermon. Miss Heavylics was kept in for sleeping, too. Miss Brownsett was punished for reading a story-book in church-time. Were you ever punished?"

"I punish myself at present. The rest is all to come. But at last this long-winded dinner is over. Here is dessert. Will you let me peel you an apple? A nice red, juicy apple, Lily?"

"If you please," said the child. "I like to be called Lily."

She watched with much amused curiosity the process of peeling a ribstone pippin. Sir William

accomplished the task very deftly, and having removed the peel in one long spiral, threw it over his shoulder upon the carpet.

"There," he cried, "the letter the peel will form, will be the initial of your sweetheart's name. Let's look at it. Why, it's a W!"

"And W stands for William," exclaimed Lily, in an ecstasy. "How nice. And will you be my sweetheart?"

"Of course, if we ever see one another again. Countess," he continued, "we have been trying the Sortes Virgilianæ, and Fate declares that I am to be your little girl's sweetheart."

"*'Sortes! Virgile!'* Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?" replied the lady addressed. "I don't know what you are talking about. *Est-ce que vous radotez, mon garçon?*"

"We hadn't a copy of Virgil, so we tried an apple. The peel came down in a W."

"Absurdity!" cried the lady. "What nonsense to put into the child's head."

To the most magnificent feast there must be a termination, and at last the Greenwich dinner came to an end. It had been a very merry dinner indeed, and the two quietest guests were Lily and Sir William Long. It had been a very merry dinner, and when the cloth was removed, and more wines—red wines—were brought on, it became quite an uproarious dinner. After a time, one of

the gentlemen rose and proposed the health of their charming guest, the Countess, in a speech which was very eloquent, and very full of compliments, and which was received with thunders of applause; but in which there was faint suspicion (I am inclined to think) of the speaker making fun of the Countess. The audience, however, laughed and cheered tremendously, and in the midst of the oration, and the thumpings on the table, and the clattering of the plates, and the clinking of the glasses, Sir William Long stole away quietly with Lily into the balcony.

He bade her look out on the river, so calm and glassy, and the great ships with their dusky hulls lying so tranquil, and the cottages with curling smoke, and the cows and horses in the meadows opposite. They looked for a time quite silently at the glories of the setting sun. The child was glad to be away from the hot room, and the fumes of the wine, the riotous noise, and the strange wild company. She nestled close to the tall gentleman, and looked up in his face lovingly.

"Are you happy, dear?" he said, smoothing her curls again.

"I should be, if I was going back to school; but the lady says that I am to be taken away from Mrs. Bunycastle's and sent to another school. Perhaps they will be unkind to me there. Oh! I do wish I was going back to Miss Babby."

Sir William muttered something. Lily could not gather its entire purport, but she thought she heard him say that he was a fool, and that it was no concern of his. And then he turned towards her, and asked her in a strange voice if she liked him.

"Of course I do," the child answered, readily. "Lily always loves the people who have been kind to her. I should like to be your little wife, and make you a pair of nice red muffatees for the winter. I should like to go to the waxwork show every day—but not into that dreadful room where the naughty men are—and I should like you to be very good, and take me to church every Sunday, and always give sixpence to the poor old blind man with one leg, who now stands at the corner by our school. Miss Babby says he was at the battle of Waterloo, and was very brave there, only they won't give him a pension, because he is fond of rum, and beats his wife."

This rambling prattle was interrupted by the Countess, who came abruptly into the balcony, and demanded whether Sir William Long intended to elope with the little one, and what he meant by keeping her out there in the chilly night air?

"The chilly night air is better," the baronet—for such was his title—replied, "than that noisy oven inside. However, your little girl has made me quite meek and obedient, and we will go in if

you wish it. How long do you intend to remain, Countess?"

"Are you tired of my company? It is true that you have not condescended to bestow much of yours upon *me* to-night. Are you fascinated with *la petite*?"

"A very harmless fascination, I humbly think. I wish I had known no worse."

"Ah! vous en avez fait des belles! Upon my word, you have been a most gallant cavalier—to a baby."

"I have done my duty by the baby, and my best to preserve her from bogies and vampires."

"You are an excellent nurse."

"I have tried to prevent her wanting any pills or powders to-morrow."

"*You* will want brandy and soda-water to-morrow, as you always do. There, let her go with the chambermaid, and get ready to go home. We return to town to-night, and we have a long journey to make to-morrow."

"What are you going to do with her, Countess?" asked Sir William Long, when the chambermaid, notwithstanding an unanimous protest against the lady's threatened departure, had been rung for, and conducted the child to her robing-room.

"C'est mon affaire. She belongs to me. Do I ask you where you spend your evenings, or what you do with the things that belong to you?"

"Heaven knows, I should be able to give you but sorry answers, if you did. I am sick of my life."

"Why don't you marry?"

"You have tried it. How did you like it?"

The Countess shrugged her shoulders. "It is different," she said. "I am not a man; I only wish I were one. *Mon mari était un lâche—un misérable.*"

"Countess."

"Well, Sir William."

"I think there are few things you would hesitate about selling."

"Well, I am not particular. I like money; it buys so many things, and enables one to mock one's self of the world. Well, what then?"

"I wish you would consent to sell me your little girl."

"To put her in a cabinet among the china and the pictures that you give such mad prices for? Thank you."

"I will give you a cheque for a thousand pounds and my bay mare, Sontag."

"What would you do with her?"

"By Heaven's help, I would endeavour to save her from perdition."

"Whither I, her guardian and protectress, am leading her. I am very much obliged to you, Sir William Long, but you are not rich enough to buy

her. Nor yet is M. de Rothschild. I bought her, voyez-vous, or I stole her, whichever you please. She represents to me, success, triumph, vengeance. By having her to do what I like with, I win a bet ten times greater than all you ever had in one of those little books English gentlemen ruin themselves over—a bet I made to myself seven years ago. I have won it, and I have the honour to wish you a very good evening.”

She went into the dining-room, Sir William following her sadly. She contemptuously resisted all entreaties to stay, to take coffee, to try one little cigarette. She bade her “charming Good-for-nothings” a scornful farewell, and bestowed on them, at parting, a blessing that sounded curiously like a curse. Then she went and robed herself, and flinging the chambermaid a crown piece, which that buxom servitor felt much inclined to fling back again, she led the child, who was beginning to feel sleepy, although it was scarcely yet dark, down stairs.

The affable landlord once more butted at her with his bald head, when Sir William Long, who had quietly followed, made his appearance.

“I must bid my little pet good night,” he said, taking both the child’s hands in his. “May I kiss her, Countess?”

“Yes; but don’t slip a sovereign into her hand. I saw you take one out of your waistcoat-pocket.”

Sir William bit his lip. "It was not a sovereign," he was beginning to say, but he stopped himself prudently. "Keep that," he whispered, as he stooped down and pressed Lily's forehead with his lips. "Don't lose it; keep it in remembrance of the man with the tall face and the long legs you met at Greenwich. Keep it, and don't, on any account, let your mamma see it."

"Good-by, sir," said Lily, grasping something hard and smooth that he had given her.

"God bless you!" returned the baronet. "I heartily wish you were my little sister or my daughter."

The landlord and the waiters were obsequiously anxious to know whether the lady had a carriage, or whether they should procure a carriage for her. She had not the one, and did not require the other, she said. She felt hot, and intended to take a walk, and then engage a fly for her conveyance to London.

"I have my drag here," said Sir William; "I can drive you to town in it, if you like."

"You are wanted up-stairs. On vous demande là-haut," the Countess returned. "The Good-for-nothings are clamorous for you back again. Go away. Adieu." And she swept off.

But Sir William Long did not rejoin the choice knot of boon companions in the dining-saloon. He lighted a cigar, and ordered his drag to be brought

round. By-and-by, came up a stately four-in-hand, with two grooms, the horses champing. He mounted the box, covered himself up with coats and rugs, and, amidst a tempest of bows from the assembled waiters, drove moodily back to town, smoking all the way.

Sir William Long was one of the wildest young men in London. He was immensely rich, and his prodigality, reckless as it was, could scarcely keep pace with his revenues. That evening, however, he felt very little inclined for prodigality. He did not go to Gamridge's. He forbore to look in at Crockford's. He went nowhere in the direction of such places. He drove straight to Pall-Mall, and went up-stairs to some chambers he had there, where he drank soda-water, and smoked, and read Robinson Crusoe till two in the morning. And, when he went to bed, he had confused dreams of being married, and sitting in a garden with children about his knee. And all the children were like Lily.

"Poor little creature!" he murmured, turning on his pillow, next morning. "What a life there lies before her! What does that monstrous woman intend to do with the child? To make her a rope-dancer, or a horse-rider, or what?"

"The governor's hipped, that's sure," Mr. Vernish, Sir William's valet, observed that day to Mrs. Springbone, the lady who officiated as housekeeper

at the chambers, 290, Pall-Mall. "He wouldn't have no brandy-and-soda this morning; he wouldn't have no devilled kidneys, and no anchovy toast. He breakfasted on a cup of tea and a roll, and he set off for a walk by hisself in the Green Park. I think he's in love."

"By Jove! I *will* get married," cried William Long to himself that very morning. "I'll go to Peignoir's and have my hair cut, and I'll call on the Cœurdesarts."

The which he did, punctually.

CHAPTER II.

LILY IS FITTED OUT BY CUTWIG AND CO.

GREENWICH PARK was kept open later, long ago, than it is at present. It was getting dark when the lady and the child entered by the western gate. The Countess seemed to know her way perfectly well, and they pursued the path towards the Observatory. The moon was up, and Lily looked about her in wonderment. The tall trees and the brown bars of shadow they cast upon the moonlit grass, which looked almost frosty in its brightness; the deer—more numerous then than now—that peeped furtively, showing their gleaming heads from the thickets, like fairies playing at hide-and-seek; the birds, disturbed in their dreams (by imaginary cats, perchance), that came fluttering off the boughs, and then, reassured, went fluttering back again; at all these

sights the child looked, and marvelled, and forgot her sleepiness.

When they had skirted One-tree Hill, and gained the earthwork rampart that runs round the picturesque old edifice where Halley dwelt, they found it almost deserted. A soldier in a bearskin cap much too big for him, was whistling for want of thought, and flicking his penny cane against the brick wall. He was a temperate Grenadier, or else fortune had been unkind to him, and he had not got as much beer as he wanted. At all events, he was melancholy. A sweetheart-ing couple were wrangling in a subdued tone on one of the benches. A long day spent in the society of the adored one of our hearts not unfrequently ends in mutual distaste.

The Grenadier had disappeared, whistling, and they were left alone. It was very calm and still. The stars seemed to smile on Lily. She looked up at the moon, and tried to shape its tranquil face into the pale handsome countenance of the tall gentleman who had been so kind to her. She still kept the something hard and smooth he had given her, slightly clasped in her hand. She did not dare to look at it, but by a quick furtive movement, slipped it into the bosom of her frock. Was Lily naughty, to practise concealment so early?

It was a time for good and tranquil thoughts;

a time to be at peace and good will with mankind; a time for studious men, of pure and blameless lives, to ascend their watch-towers, and read the starry heavens through their long glasses. Lily gazed wistfully upon the shadowy prospect, the great panorama of verdure now bathed in soft haze, upon the distant river, the hospital domes looming large, the lights twinkling from the ports of the great hospital ship. The child, though no longer drowsy, felt as though this were her bedtime out of doors, and longed to say her prayers, and lie down under one of the tall trees, with the deer to keep watch over her.

The lady, seemingly, was in no such tranquil mood. She had been muttering to herself all the way, and Lily had been far too nervous to speak to her.

"Yes; they will have a wild night," she said, between her teeth; "an orgie! And my life! Is it anything better—orgie upon orgie, feast upon feast, boiling oil upon red-hot coals. Look here, you young cat," she pursued, turning upon Lily, "attend to me. Do you know who I am?"

The child, trembling in every limb, stammered a negative.

"I am your mother."

"I thought my mamma was in heaven, ma'am," Lily answered, in a very low voice; "Miss Babby always told me so."

And, indeed, when the child, perplexed by the frequent questions and occasional jeerings of the girls who had mammas, had interrogated Miss Barbara Bunnycastle on the subject, the governess had returned her the answer quoted above, not knowing what else to tell her. Had not M. J. B. Constant said that Miss Floris's mamma was dead?

"You are not likely to meet either of your parents there," pursued the lady, in a scornful voice. "*Va chercher ailleurs, mon enfant, c'est là-bas que tu les trouveras.* You will never have any other mother than me. Do you love me?"

The child was silent.

"That's right. Don't tell me a lie. If you had, I would have beaten you. Ah, my pullet, you don't know what blows are. Your little entertainment is all to come. Listen to me; you are going to school, a long way off. You are no longer to be made a pet and a darling of. Nobody ever petted *me*. You shall live hard; you shall work. *Sacrebleu!* you shall work, you cub!"

The child was, fortunately, too young to understand more than that the lady was very cross. What had she done that the lady was so angry with her? Lily was too frightened to weep; but she trembled more than ever.

"Ah! the night air. You will gain a chill," cried the strange lady, with capricious tenderness.

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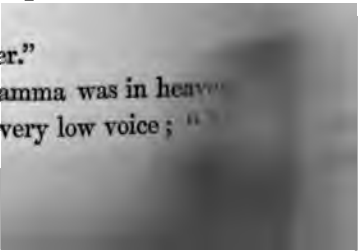
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motion with the servant-of-all-work respecting breakfast: in the midst of which a stout landlady arrived, breathless, to give the lodger warning.


"Flesh and blood can't stand it no longer," said the indignant dame. "I'd rather have the parlours empty for six months than be scarified in this obstroperous manner. A true-born Englishwoman ain't to be treated like a black Injin."

"And like the dirt under your feet," added the servant-of-all-work, who was in tears.

"And you'd better suit yourself elsewhere, mum," the landlady continued.

"Canaille!" the Countess replied. "I would not remain another twenty-four hours in your wretched hovel for twenty pounds. Give me your swindling bill, and I will pay it. I leave this evening."

The day was a strange one, and the lady scarcely exchanged half a dozen words with Lily. She was in too great a rage after the commotion, to breakfast in Golden-square, so took the child to a French coffee-house under the colonnade of the Italian Opera. Then they had a hackney-coach, and went a long long way through low and darkling Temple Bar into the City, until they reached a large shop in a crowded street. They entered this warehouse, and the lady said to the assistant, "This little girl is going to school, supply her with all she wants, and put it in a trunk."



The assistant, who was a joyous middle-aged man in spectacles, and whose stiff shirt collars made indentations in his plump cheeks, submitted that it would take a good hour and a half to furnish the young lady's outfit; and asked where he might have the honour of sending the esteemed order?

"I will take it away with me," she answered. "We will return in a couple of hours. Stay; can you take charge of the child for that time?"

The assistant replied that they would only be too happy to take care of the young lady for that period.

"Then stay here," said the lady to Lily, "and don't get into mischief. At four o'clock (it was now close upon two) I shall be here." And she went away.

"Is that your mamma, my dear?" the stout assistant with the spectacles asked, when the lady had taken her departure.

"Y—y—es," answered Lily, hesitating somewhat.

"Ah! Dear me. A handsome lady, *quite* the lady, in fact," he continued. "A proud one, too," he said to himself. "Looks as if she had a devil of a temper. A Tartar, I'll be sworn. Now, Miss Eldred, my good young lady, will you be good enough to come here, and we'll get this little matter in hand."

Miss Eldred was a tall lady, but the prefix "young" could be applied to her only in courtesy. She was bony, but benignant. She was clad in brown merino, which fitted her so straight that her dress looked like the section of a pair of trousers. She smiled affably on Lily, and asked her whether she had ever been at school before? Upon which Lily told her all she knew about the Bunnycastle, and things in general, and soon grew quite companionable with her, and then the little matter of her outfit was put in hand.

Lily never spent a pleasanter two hours in her life. It was a wonderful shop, and they seemed to sell everything. They showed her cabins complete with swinging cots, and lamps, and delightful little shiny washing-stands, and miniature chests of drawers, which they fitted up on board ships bound for Australia. They showed her great black sea-chests with "Captain Widgeon, Madras," and "Lieutenant Rampelbuggins, Cape of Good Hope," painted thereupon in white letters. They showed her bales of shirts, stacks of stockings, hives of straw hats, bags, portmanteaus, writing-desks, dressing-cases, sextants, chronometers, and cases of digestive biscuits.

"We sell saddles," the stout assistant remarked, with conscious pride. "We sell beer. We sell anchors, likewise school-books, also bonnets, and pickles, and parasols, and anchovy paste. We are

general shippers. If you require preserved beef, there are five hundred cases of it in the left-hand corner. Do you want any curry powder? That's your sort. You've only to ask for a chain cable, my dear, and you can have it at per foot. We fit out everybody. A bride, or an Admiral of the Blue, a midshipman, or an Indian rajah, a little school-girl, or the governor of Cape Coast Castle; it's all one to us. When you go to school, and they ask who fitted you out at two hours' notice, just hand 'em the card of Cutwig and Co., will you?"

He presented the child with a packet of address cards on the spot. "We furnish funerals, too," he went on chirpingly, "and we've sent out wedding-breakfasts in hermetically sealed tins; but we couldn't get the lobster salad to keep in the Indian Ocean, so that branch had to be given up. But if they want any Devonshire clotted cream at Singapore, or any canary-birds in New Zealand, they send to Cutwig and Co. for 'em. We might have done a powerful stroke of business in portable theatres for the colonies, but the late Mrs. Cutwig was pious, and wouldn't hear of it."

Meanwhile Miss Eldred, assisted by a slender, pretty girl, whom she addressed as 'Melia, and who was her niece, had been busied in trying various articles of apparel on Lily, and asking if she thought them pretty. And then the stout assistant, whose name was Ranns, asked Lily for her name,

saying that he only knew her mamma as a customer, and a very good customer she was, but rather uppish. Lily said her name was Floris, not knowing whether she would escape censure from the strange lady for making that revelation unlicensed; and then Mr. Ranns whispered something down a pipe, and in a quarter of an hour afterwards a man in a fur cap suddenly popped up a trap in the floor, in one corner, and heaved forward into view a neat trunk covered with black leather, and inscribed with the name of Miss FLORIS in capitals of white paint.

“Stencilled and varnished at once, by our patent instantaneous process,” remarked Mr. Ranns, rubbing his palms together in quiet complacency at the expedition in all matters observed by Cutwig and Co. “Lord bless you! we’d knock all the names of the officers of a seventy-four, with brass nails into their chests, in forty minutes. Yours is rather an uncommon name, my dear, else we generally keep the names of everybody in the Post-office Directory ready painted on portmantaus, chests, and travelling bags, in sets of two hundred and fifty apiece.”

At this stage of the conversation Miss Eldred suggested that the young lady must be hungry; and Lily, nothing loth, accompanied her to a back parlour of triangular shape, smelling rather too strongly of new chests of drawers, fresh feather-

beds, and oilskin hats, but still very snug and comfortable. And there, Lily, and Miss Eldred, and 'Melia, and Mr. Ranns, dined off a roast leg of mutton, and vegetables, and a very nice apple-pudding. Lily observed that Miss Eldred dined in her thimble, and Mr. Ranns in a hurry, with a pen behind his ear; likewise that the front of 'Melia's dress was so garnished with threaded needles, that it might have done good service as a martial buckler.

"Half a glass of sherry, and a nice rosy-cheeked apple—we export 'em, my dear, by hogsheads—for Miss Floris," chirped Mr. Ranns, "and then we must go to business. This is a mill that never stops, my dear." And, indeed, it never did. Business had been going on very briskly all through dinner-time; and a dozen times at least Mr. Ranns had popped up from the table, and bustled into the shop to supply intending shippers with flannel jerseys, or barometers, or bird-cages, or something of an equally miscellaneous description. The ad interim charge of Cutwig and Co.'s establishment was, however, left to a lanky youth of vacant mien, whom Mr. Ranns described as being rather soft in his head, and a poor salesman, but a capital hand at accounts.

After dinner, Lily was taken into the counting-house—a dark little box with a raised floor, to which you ascended by half a dozen steps, and

which was fenced all round by balustraded panels, like a family pew. Here the vacant youth kept the accounts of the house, in a series of immense volumes, covered in rough calf and bound in brass. He was a good-tempered lad, though imbecile, and permitted Lily to peep into one of the big ledgers, where she saw a great deal of writing in a neat, fat, round hand, almost as beautiful as copies.

"We call 'em our week-day Bibles," remarked Mr. Ranns, facetiously. "We ship to all the world six days in the week, and go to church on Sundays."

Lily thought the big ledgers very beautiful, but wondered by what clairvoyance the vacant youth could contrive to write in them in the dark.

"Are you fond of apples," the vacant clerk whispered to her, with a friendly leer.

Lily modestly avowed a partiality for the fruit in question.

"Then 'ere's another," pursued the clerk, "and another; I dote on apples, I do. I always buy 'em when I'm sent out with bills for acceptance. My wages is eighteen. I gives my mother, which is a widder, twelve, and I spends the rest on apples. I don't go to the theayter. Cutwig and Co. don't like it. It's wicked. I eats apples all day. They 'elps me with the figures." And the clerk resumed his caligraphy in the dark, munching as he wrote.

And now nothing would suit Mr. Ranns—by

whom this amicable conversation had not been heard—but that Miss Floris should be taken up-stairs and presented to the head of the house, Cutwig and Co. itself. So, up-stairs went Lily, pleased and amused, and in a front drawing-room they found, reading a newspaper, and with a bottle of wine before him, such a nice dear old gentleman, with a powdered head which wagged to and fro, and with gold-rimmed spectacles. This was Mr. Cutwig, head of the firm, Co. and all. He was eighty years of age, and father of his company. “Might have been alderman and passed the chair long ago, but the late Mrs. Cutwig was a lofty soul, and couldn’t abear the corporation. She thought it low,” said Mr. Ranns.

“Fitted her out, sir,” was the simple speech accompanying the presentation of Lily.

“Good lad, good lad,” piped old Mr. Cutwig, in a very shrill treble (Mr. Ranns might have been on the shady side of forty). “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he’ll be worth eighty thousand pound, and on the Court of Assistants. Here’s a new shilling from the Mint, my dear.”

He pulled out of his waistcoat-pocket a very dazzling piece of money, which, with a shaking hand, he gave to Lily. The child had some scruples as to accepting it, but, at a discreet sign from Mr. Ranns, she took it and thanked him.

“I came into this town nigh upon seventy year

ago, by the Dover waggon, with one-and-fippence-halfpenny in my pocket," piped old Mr. Cutwig. "I slept on a hop-sack in the Borough market. Many a little makes a mickle. Honesty is the best policy. Ask Ranns. He's a good lad, and has been with me, man and boy, over seven-and-twenty year. I always took care of my shop, and my shop always took care of me."

Here the old gentleman's head began to wag more rapidly, and Lily noticed that he was holding his newspaper upside down.

"He's breaking fast," Mr. Ranns mentioned confidentially, as, the interview being over, he conducted Lily down stairs, "but he's as good as gold. Wonderful man of business in his time, my dear. He'd get up at six o'clock and ship two tons of goods to the colonies before breakfast, but he's a little out of date now, and when you come back from school you mustn't be surprised to see Ranns and Eldred over the door, late Cutwig and Co. Unless," he continued, in a contemplative undertone, "Ranns turns into Eldred, and Eldred into Ranns."

It was four o'clock when they reached the shop again. Lily's outfit was quite completed, and she sat down meekly on her trunk, and waited for about half an hour longer, when a grand carriage came driving furiously to the door, and a powdered footman (there were two behind the carriage)

descended and handed out Lily's protectress. The child saw the lady turn on the threshold as she entered and wave her hand in token of farewell to an old gentleman in the carriage. He was a splendid gentleman, with a fringe of white whisker round his face, and Lily somehow fancied that she had seen him before. Was it at the Greenwich dinner, yesterday?

The handsome lady was radiant. Lily had never seen her look so good tempered. She was pleased with everything, and, to Miss Eldred, was positively civil. Mr. Ranns handed her, with a low bow, the invoice for the child's outfit. The lady, just glancing at the sum total, instantly, and without question, disbursed the amount in crisp bank-notes. Then a hackney-coach was called, and the trunk hoisted on to it, and Lily herself was lifted into the vehicle.

The coach was just driving away, when Mr. Ranns, bearing a package which seemed to be a small canoe wrapped in brown paper, came running to the coach door.

"Beg pardon for the liberty, ma'am," he said, deferentially, "but would you allow this parcel to be put into the coach? Miss Floris is such a dear little girl, and we forgot to take off five per cent. discount for cash. It's only a Noah's ark, with Cutwig and Co.'s compliments." And Mr. Ranns ran back again as hard as he could into Cutwig

and Co.'s premises: thus obviating the possibility of the lady indignantly declining the present, or launching the canoe bodily at his head.

But the lady didn't decline it. She was in far too good a temper to do that. In fact, she condescended to tell Lily that it was kind, really very kind, of the people in the shop; and she so smiled on her, and looked generally so splendid and so benignant, that the child gazed upon her face with an admiring awe, as though she had been an animated rainbow.

"What do you think of *that*, little one?" she said, in a triumphant voice, flashing before the child's eyes a great bracelet which encircled her wrist, and which blazed with diamonds. When suddenly she descried something shining in Lily's hand. It was the new shilling from the Mint.

The child, blushing and stammering, explained that the nice old gentleman with the powdered head had given it her, and that she had at first hesitated to take it, but that the other gentleman had told her to take it. The lady was in great wrath, snatched the coin from her, and flung it out of the coach window.

"I've a good mind to throw the Noah's ark after it," she cried, with a furious look. "You mean little wretch. *Ma foi*, you begin early to be a beggar. You have thief's blood in you. He would take anything, that base monster;" and she

went on scolding Lily, but in a rambling incoherent manner, for full five minutes. Her good temper was all gone.

By-and-by they came to Thames-street, which was full, as it always is, of carts, and drays, and barrels, and sugar-loaves, and piles of dried haddocks, and dirt, and clamour. And there, at the entrance to a narrow lane, stood an individual in a suit of oilskin, who was crying at the top of his voice, "The Bolong steamer ! The Bolong steamer ! This way to the Bolong steamer !" till he almost deafened Lily.

There was a porter waiting by the side of this individual, and he had a truck and some luggage on it. The luggage belonged to the lady. The porter touched his cap, and assisted the coachman to remove Lily's trunk to the truck, which he trundled down a steep passage and along a wooden pier, and so on board a ship, much larger than the steamer in which Lily had gone to Greenwich. The deck was covered with people, luggage, and merchandise. Everybody was running about in the most distracted manner, and a great bell kept dingdonging furiously. Then a rope fell across Lily's feet and hurt her toes, and the steam began to make a hideous noise, and the funnel began to vomit great masses of black smoke, and the captain, who stood on a bridge above the deck, gave a number of orders in a hoarse voice, which a dirty boy

who stood below him repeated in a shrill one. And then the wharf and the warehouses beyond it, and the people upon it, all seemed to be moving away; but it was the steamer itself, and its crew, and Lily, who were moving.

She was on board the Harlequin steam-packet, bound for Boulogne. The shore drifted away from her; the last sound she heard on shore was the voice of the porter, with whom the lady had had a trifling dispute respecting payment, and who was shaking his fist at her, and bawling out:

“You call yourself a lady! You call yourself a lady! Yah!”

CHAPTER III.

LILY IS IN A STRANGE COUNTRY.

It was three o'clock on the following morning before the steam-packet Harlequin entered the harbour of Boulogne. Lily had had a fearful time of it. She was very comfortable, and almost happy during the passage of the vessel down the river; for the weather was fine, the water was smooth, and her protectress, betaking herself to the perusal of sundry volumes bound in yellow paper, left her at peace. Then, a gentleman in a braided surtout, with very large whiskers and moustache, a cap with a gold band to it, and who continually smoked a pipe with a very richly-coloured brown bowl, a silver top, and a green tassel depending from it, and who wore, besides, a leathern bag slung by a strap over his shoulder, was very

kind to her, and showed her a variety of interesting objects on both banks of the river. He was a most good-humoured gentleman, but his English was, to Lily, well-nigh incomprehensible.

"Did you ligue joggolate?" he asked, in a hoarse voice, and a grin that sent his black whiskers very far apart indeed. "Joggolate is good for de liddle kinder. Yez, it is moldo grazioso. Denez, ma bedide, here is some joggolate."

He produced from the leathern bag, as he spoke, a stick of chocolate wrapped in some neat tinfoil. This covering he partially stripped off, broke off a piece of the sweetmeat, and popped it, with a jovial grin, between Lily's lips. The child had never tasted chocolate before. Then he began to fill his pipe from a pouch likewise produced from the leathern bag, and as he shut the latter, Lily seemed to hear the chinking of money.

"Mein good little friend, ma bonne amie, gif me de bouch," he continued. "It is moldo grazioso. She gif them to me, begause I lof her. I lof de bipes and de tobacko. De bipes is not good for de liddle kinder. He make romfozzle in der stomjacks zo."

Then, from a pocket in his braided surtout, he took a little case-bottle, unscrewed the top, and applied it to his lips.

"De brandies is goods," he remarked, throwing his head back. "De brandies is goods for de mal

de mer. By-and-by your mamma, when de sea shall romfozzle your stomjacks, shall give you some brandies in your tea. A ver liddle, zo. Vill you ave some more joggolate?"

But here the lady looked up from the French novel she was reading, and angrily bade the child come and sit beside her. "You are not to associate with servants and low people. *Que font ces gens-là dans cette partie du vaisseau?*"

Lily thought that if the braided and whiskered gentleman was a servant, he was a very handsome and a very good-natured one. He walked away, grumbling.

"Diavolo!" he murmured. "*Quelle mégère. She needn'ts be so tam proud for what I am a gourier. Franz Stimm il vaut bien cette sauteuse sour les zevaux.*"

It would be, perhaps, more correct, as the braided gentleman was talking to himself, to inscribe, in their native tongue, the thoughts to which he gave utterance, but the gentleman hadn't any native tongue or native country either, to speak of; Franz Stimm was a courier, and knew all tongues, and all countries—a little.

By degrees the lady became absorbed again in the study of her French novels, and Lily stole softly away from her side, and went and sat on the little raised part of the deck above the rudder chains, and studied the weather-beaten man in the

pea-jacket who was at the helm. By-and-by, being totally ignorant of the printed injunction of prohibition, she had the audacity to speak to the man at the wheel; and the man himself—it being a quiet afternoon, and the captain being in his cabin refreshing himself with his after-dinner grog—spoke to her. No great harm resulted from this contravention of maritime discipline. He told her all about the Dreadnought, and the windmills on the Essex shore, and the great guns at Woolwich Arsenal; also, that a many had been hung at Execution Dock, and that when he was a lad in war-time, he had been pressed and kept four days and nights aboard the guardship at the Nore, notwithstanding his being a 'prentice, and having a 'stifficate from Waterman's Hall in his pocket.

But this confiding mariner was in time removed, and the hairy man in the striped guernsey who succeeded him was not so communicative. He was absorbed with his spokes, and, what little time he had to spare, was devoted to dexterously ejecting the juice from the quid he was chewing over the leeward bulwark. Now and then he missed his aim, and then he swore monosyllabically. Lily couldn't make friends with him, and presently stole away.

In those days rich people were not quite so proud as they are now. At least, they did not appear quite so genteel, quite so exclusive, quite so shut

up, as I learn they are at present. In these days a member of the "superior orders" would faint at the bare idea of travelling to Boulogne by the common packet from London Bridge; but, when Lily was young, a great many wealthy and high-born people were content to take that route as the pleasantest though not the shortest. And more than that, they took their servants and their carriages with them.

There was a handsome private carriage—a berlin painted green, with a rumble, heavy wheels, and a big imperial on the roof—aboard the Harlequin, nearly amidships but slightly forward. Lily was wandering about the deck, and occasionally tripping herself up over the stiff protrusions of tarpaulin, when she came to this carriage. She was admiring the pretty manner in which the wheels were lashed to bolts in the deck, when she heard a voice she recognised, and looking up saw that the carriage door was open. Standing thereat was the bearded gentleman with the braided surtout who spoke such very funny English.

"Acht Himmel!" he cried, pleased to see her. "Here is de liddle cal vat eat de joggolate. Mein Signor Generale, she is ver preddy. She is the dordor of de handsome dame dat loog lige de diger."

There was a gentleman in the carriage, reclining at full length on a mattress. He was covered to

the chin with rugs, and cloaks, and furs, and had a yellow face, and looked very ill. He shrugged his shoulders peevishly at the courier's remark, and a thin voice, which seemed very tired of itself and all the world, bade Stimm not bother him, but bring him some orange-flower water.

"Bedder 'ave som brandies, my lord generale," observed Mr. Stimm, in respectful expostulation. "Ve gom ver soon do de Nore, and de eau de fleur d'oranger, he play de teufels vid your stomjacks. Bedder drinks de brandy."


"Hang your brandy," cried the yellow-faced invalid, peevishly. "One would think I was a private still. My stomach's my own—at least what I've got left of it. Get me the orange-flower water, do you hear me, hey?"

The courier turned to do his behest, and Lily, frightened, was moving out of his way, when her eyes met those of the sallow gentleman. His eyes were very languid and jaundiced, but they were very black.

He started up eagerly on his invalid couch. "Merciful Heavens!" he cried, "where have I seen that face before? Stimm, bring that child here."

But before Mr. Stimm could approach Lily, a harsh hand was laid on the child's shoulder. It was the handsome lady.

"You little plague! you little demon!" she cried,



furiously. "Here have I been à la chasse for you this half-hour. What am I to do with you? Shall I throw you into the water to be eaten by the black man—by the whales and sharks, I mean? Come away this moment;" and she dragged Lily aft.

The sallow gentleman was not quite so great an invalid as he seemed to be. He descended, grumbling and moaning, however, from his carriage, and followed the lady and child to the quarter-deck; but they hastily descended the companion-ladder, and then the lady shut herself with the child in the ladies' cabin.

Lily underwent many hours of the direst agony. It grew dark, and the stewardess brought her some tea and bread-and-butter, but she could scarcely swallow a mouthful. The tea-things clattered on the table horribly. A lamp was kindled, and it swung to and fro. They put Lily to bed on a shelf in a cupboard, and the shelf began to pitch forward, and dart backward, and then it seemed to be sliding away from Lily, and then she herself was dashed against the cupboard wall. She looked out, terrified, into the cabin, and lo! the ceiling was where the floor should have been. And all this while there was a dreadful cracking noise, as though a giant were being stretched on the rack, and a dreadful throbbing sensation, which shook the very pillow beneath her head, as though the giant's heart was bursting under the torture.

She was very sick. There were eleven ladies in the cabin, and they were all sick. There was a little girl of timid aspect, a year or so older than Lily, who appeared to look upon sea-sickness as a kind of penal chastisement ordained for her sins, and who, in the intervals of nausea, screamed, "Oh, don't! oh, please don't! oh, I will be good!" and the like deprecatory ejaculations. There was one lady, tall and thin, with sad-coloured ringlets, who perpetually reiterated a request to be thrown overboard; there was another, stout, of a rubicund countenance, who had been exceedingly jolly all the afternoon, and who now, with a ghastly visage, and rolled up into a ball in a corner, repeated at short intervals, "It's coming, it's coming! I hear it, I hear it! I hear it. Lawks ha' mercy upon us!" probably anticipating the immediate scuttling of the ship, or the end of the world. And there was a poor little baby, who, in the course of seven hours, assumed many cadaverous hues, from Indian yellow to bistre, and from neutral tint to pea-green, and was given up for dead many times. It was an awful night. The stewardess bore it unmoved. She was a hardy young woman, paid not to be sea-sick, but to keep a sharp look-out after her dues; and although on shore I dare say she was as truthful a young woman as ever wore the brown merino of ordinary life, she was, on board the Harlequin, a prodigy of cool mendacity, declar-

ing when the Harlequin was off Ramsgate that they were "nearly in," and when tossing about Deal, that her good man—meaning the steward—had just seen "Bolong light."


There was somebody else who was not sick ; the handsome proud lady, Lily's protectress. She lay down on a sofa, covered herself with a great shawl, and went resolutely to sleep. Once or twice in the course of the night, waking up, she apostrophised the Harlequin, the company that owned it, and the captain and crew who navigated it, in bitterly sarcastic terms. The stewardess also she was mercilessly hard upon, for the offence of wearing thick shoes ; and more than once she chid Lily for making a noise. She tended the suffering child, however, with a kind of stern tenderness, and then went to sleep again.

At last this night of torment came to a close. The Harlequin escaped at break of day from the buffeting boiling waters of the Channel, into the smooth waters of the port, and Lily was carried in the arms of a seaman, who, in his outward guise, looked very like a grisly bear, but in his manners was as gentle as a lamb, up a ladder to a quay. There the seaman set her down, on the shore of France.

A little man, not so very much taller than Lily, but with a big moustache, and a huge cutlass, and a broad sword-belt, and a very tall glazed shako,

immediately seized on the Noah's ark which the seaman had deposited by Lily's side. The lady was close by her, but she forbore to seize the little man by the throat, or to cast him over the quay into the water. She spoke him very fair, and called him "Monsieur." Lily noticed that on this new ground her protectress was quite polite. The little soldier, however (he had red legs and bunches of red worsted on his shoulders), was as fierce as she was mild, and called out in a formidable voice, "A droite, à la Douane. Marchez donc!" Those were the days when Waterloo was still remembered, when international alliances and treaties of commerce were not thought of, and when the little soldiers of King Louis Philippe the First were very apt to be rude to those over whom they had authority.


Half stupified, trembling and dizzy with the soonest acquired, worst borne, and easiest cured of human ailments—dazed with the novelty of the scene, the glimmering lanterns contending with the grey dawn, the clash of arms, the hoarse voices of seamen and porters vociferating to each other in a strange language—the child followed her conductors to the custom-house. But, arrived there, the little inquisitive could not refrain from asking her companion why all the soldiers had red legs, and why they seemed so very angry with everybody?



Soon a stranger sight absorbed her attention. Along a low wooden bar, or counter, twenty trunks were arranged wide open, and as many men all with moustaches, or looking like soldiers, and all in a great passion, were apparently making beds. At least they tossed and tumbled the contents of all the trunks about, as though they were shaking up feather-beds: an operation which Lily had often watched with intense interest in Mrs. Bunycastle's sleeping apartment at Rhododendron House. The bearded gentleman who had given her the chocolate was in the very thickest of the confusion, and had at least half a dozen trunks to be tossed and tumbled over. He brandished a huge bunch of keys, and seemed quite as angry as the men who looked like soldiers.

At length it came to the turn of Lily and her protectress. One of the soldiers asked the lady if she had anything to "declare;" whereupon she looked as though she would have very much liked to declare war upon *him*; but she was on her behaviour now, and observed that she had nothing liable to duty. Lily's little outfit was rummaged with a recklessness that would have driven to fury even the placable Mr. Ranns at Cutwig and Co.'s; and the lady's store of purple and fine linen was recklessly rumpled, and then crammed back again into her portmanteau, as though it were so many old rags.

Even when the trunks were re-locked, and their lids inscribed with cabalistic flourishes in chalk, their troubles were not at an end; for they were conducted into a naked, whitewashed apartment, over the door of which the word "Sûreté" was written, and they were subjected, at the hands of perhaps the ugliest and snuffiest old woman who ever wore gold rings in her ears and a mob-cap on her head, to the indignity of a personal search. It is scarcely needful to say that there were no smuggled commodities about Lily. There was very little outside her, and nothing at all inside her but nausea. The lady, also, passed scathless through an abominable ordeal which has happily become a thing of the past; but she contrived to lose her temper, and gave the old woman a piece of her mind—the which assumed such formidable dimensions, that the female searcher began to yell for "la garde," and the lady had to quiet her with a five-franc piece. There were some other ladies, however, who gave even more trouble. One went into hysterics, another vowed she would write to the Times, and a third made reiterated and passionate appeals to her "Henry" (meaning her absent husband), who was himself being searched in an adjoining apartment, strewing flowers of eloquence of the strongest Britannic odour on two malignant douaniers. I think all the ladies who screamed contrived to smuggle something; and, as



Lily passed out, she saw one—the lady who had been so very anxious to be thrown overboard—being unwound of innumerable strips of contraband textile fabrics as though she had been a bad leg.

Outside the custom-house there was much crowding and shouting; and a mob of shabby men, whose hair looked dreadfully in want of cutting, encircled the travellers, thrusting cards into their hands, and bawling out the names of different hotels. And, staggering before her, Lily saw an old woman—the twin sister, seemingly, of the one who had half dragged her clothes off her back in the custom-house—with short petticoats of linsey-woolsey, and very stout legs, and very thick shoes, and a very round back, on which were poised the lady's large portmanteau, and Cutwig and Co.'s outfit. The old lady wore a mob-cap too, but she wore a man's hat over that, and a pea-jacket over her gown body, and presented a hybrid maritime appearance.

They found at last a carriage, and were taken to an hotel. And there Lily was put to bed. Quite exhausted and tired, she fell into a blessed balmy sleep, and did not wake up till late in the afternoon, when she found herself ravenously hungry, and as well as a little girl of eight years of age, with whom there had been nothing the matter but a bad fit of sea-sickness on the previous day, could be.

The lady was writing letters at a little table by the bedside.

"You lazy little thing," she said, but not very harshly. "We should have been on our road to Paris, hours ago. You have made me miss the diligence, and now we shall have to wait until to-morrow morning."

Some dinner was ordered, and it was brought by a waiter who looked quite like a gentleman, and had beautiful whiskers—but not so beautiful as those of the gentleman with the chocolate—and a clean white apron that reached down to his slippered feet. They had only a bedroom; "and," thought Lily to herself, "whatever would Mrs. Bunycastle think if a man with whiskers were to come into her bedroom!"

Lily had a little cutlet for dinner, and some potatoes fried a delicate brown. The thin wine they gave her, though it tasted sour, was of a beautiful crimson colour, and Lily thought she would very much like to have a dress for a doll of that hue.

"I like dining here better than at the large house that smelt of fish so," she said, emboldened by the not unfavourable glance the lady had cast upon her while she was eating. "It is almost as good as dinner at school."

The lady frowned. "Petite bavarde," she returned. "One wants to hear no comparisons. You are to forget Greenwich, you are to forget the

school where you were spoilt and petted by those foolish old women. You are going to a school where you will be treated properly, and have very different dinners."

Lily sighed, and relapsed into silence.

Towards sunset the lady took her for a walk about the streets, which seemed very strange to Lily, but pleased her infinitely. The houses were very white, and most of the windows had bright green blinds. The shops were full of the most delightful toys that Lily had ever seen, and among them she recognised with delight numerous little dolls, the exact effigy of the old woman in the pea-jacket and the short petticoat, who had carried the lady's portmanteau and Cutwig and Co.'s trunk, from the custom-house to the carriage. Only these dolls hadn't any short pipes in their mouths, as the real woman had.

If Lily had been with Miss Barbara Bunycastle, she would have dragged her to the window, and kept her there for ten minutes discussing the merits of these dolls. If she had been with the tall gentleman who kissed her at Greenwich—she seemed to feel the impress of his lips on her forehead now—she would have asked him boldly to buy her one of the dolls, and would have told him that she would pay for it when she grew up. But she was afraid to say such things to the lady, and could only sate herself with the fascinating images by

casting furtive glances over her shoulder. She could not help, however—as they passed another shop whose window was positively bursting with dolls—asking the lady who the old women at the custom-house were, and why some of them wore red petticoats and some blue? They had met more ancient dames of the same stamp in the street that afternoon; but they were barefoot, and wore yellow kirtles, and carried great nets slung on sticks over their shoulders.

The lady told her, tartly, that the old women were sailors' widows. "It is good to be a widow," she continued, "when your husband is a robber, and a villain, and a lâche. Now ask me no more questions. *Tu m'agaces.*"

They went for a walk on the pier, where it blew very hard, and a brave colour came into Lily's cheeks, which the agony of the Harlequin had rendered wan. They met a good many gentlemen who seemed on speaking terms with the lady. Some of them patted Lily on the head, but she did not like them. They seemed coarse and rude to her.

"They are not so nice as the gentlemen at Greenwich," she remarked, timidly. "Ah! what a nice gentleman that was who said he was wicked! But I don't believe he was wicked. He had such beautiful eyes, and he was so kind to me. I don't like these gentlemen."

Her companion angrily bade her, for a little fool, hold her tongue, and they resumed their promenade. They passed a great many ladies who were *not* on speaking terms with the Countess, but were on staring terms with, or rather at, her. They looked at her very hard, and then averted their heads.

At first the lady was scornful; and muttered that there was no need for them to turn up their noses, nature having turned them up quite sufficiently as it was. But anon she grew fierce; and, as they turned back from the pier-head, cried, loud enough for Lily to hear her :

“Malediction ! Am I the cholera ? Am I the plague ? I buy my bonnets where those English misses buy theirs. I use the same whalebone and buckram. I paint myself with the same paint. Why do they stare at me as though I were a beast in the Jardin des Plantes ?”

Why indeed ? Lily could not tell. She had seen some ladies as handsome as the Countess pass by, and yet there was not one of them who looked so peculiar. It is certain that she had an odd appearance. What was there in her ? She was dressed in exquisite taste. She had no gaudy hues in her garments. It was very strange, but so it was. Perhaps her temper had something to do with it.

So, Lily pondering and the lady fuming, they

returned to the hotel, where Lily was glad to be put to bed early, and the lady sat up till late reading her novels. They were both up by seven in the morning. There was a disturbance about the bill, and the Countess told the landlord he was a robber. But that was usual; and all things considered, the lady might for once have hit the right nail on the head. I have stopped at the same hotel myself (I won't mention it by name, for fear of being libellous), and I can't help thinking, under correction, that the landlord *was* a robber.

CHAPTER IV.

LILY IS LEFT ALONE IN A STRANGE COUNTRY.

IN the court-yard of the post-office, not far from the hotel, Lily was introduced to an enormous machine—like a hackney-coach, an omnibus, and a post-chaise, stuck together—painted yellow, and surmounted in the front by a kind of hackney-cab, and in the rear by a tremendous pile of luggage covered with a tarpaulin. The formidable edifice was mounted on very heavy wheels, and to it were harnessed, by very ragged looking ropes, six horses, three abreast, and as ragged as the cords which confined them. This was the Paris diligence belonging to the Messageries Royales of Messrs. Lafitte, Caillard, and Company, and such of my courteous readers who may have attained middle-age, and went to school in France, have probably

journeyed by this same lumbering, lagging, and comfortless conveyance.

The hackney-coach compartment, which held six, was called the *intérieur*; the omnibus-looking compartment, which afforded want of accommodation for eight passengers, went by the name of the *rotonde*; and that portion of the vehicle which has been likened to a post-chaise, and in which three persons could sit, sufficiently ill at ease, was entitled the *coupé*. The lady had retained the whole of this *coupé*: one place for herself, another for Lily, and the third for her temper; although it is questionable whether the entire diligence would have been big enough to hold that. After a time, an individual in a semi-military uniform, with an embroidered badge on his arm, and a laced cap and a peak to it, who was the conductor or guard of the machine, came to the window and read off the passengers' names from a way-bill; then a tall *gendarme* in a cocked-hat and jack-boots, who had come, it is to be presumed, to see Lily off, and to ascertain by ocular inspection whether she was carrying an infernal machine to Paris, to blow up the Orleans dynasty withal, waved one of his buckskin gauntlets in token of dismissal; the postilion, a frightful-looking creature, in monstrous jack-boots, and with a quantity of parti-coloured ribbons, all very dirty, streaming from his hat, cracked his whip, and began to scream out some abusive lan-

guage to his horses, and the top-heavy caravan jolted out of the post-office yard.

They were swaying and staggering over the ill-paved streets of the town, when a carriage which Lily had seen before, passed them at a steadily rapid pace. It was the green berline which had been lashed to the deck of the Harlequin, and reclining in it was the invalid gentleman with the yellow face. There was room in the rumble for M. Franz Stimm, and there his place properly was; but he was a confidential courier, and, the carriage being broad, occupied a place by his master's side.

"There is that little girl again," the sallow man remarked, fretfully, as they passed the diligence.

"She is ver graziosa; I gif her some joggolate, my lord generale," returned the courier.

"Don't my lord me, Stimm," peevisly exclaimed the invalid; "nor general me either. I never was the one, and I'm sick of having been the other. I can't get that little girl's face out of my head. It haunts me. Who can she be?"

"Bah! bas grand zhose," Monsieur Stimm observed, in reply. "Za mère elle est oune gatine; ouf! oune diablesse. I zink I zee her somewhere in de zeatre, dancing on de cord or jumping on de horse. Haoup-la!"

But the diligence was by this time many yards

behind, and the invalid, pettishly asking for some orange-flower, and being, as usual, persuaded to take what Monsieur Franz Stimm termed "gognac," forgot, for the time, the bright little face which, he said, had haunted him.

The occupants of the coupé travelled all that day along dusty roads, for the most part bordered with tall trees, like walking-sticks surmounted by birch-brooms. The perspective was not enchanting. The fields were of an ugly ashen green, and divided by ditches, not hedges. There were no pretty villages by the roadside; what buildings there were, did not get beyond tumbledown stone hovels, at the doors of which toothless old women, with their heads bandaged up, sat at spinning-wheels, or dirty children sprawled. From time to time they met a man walking, in a blouse and sabots, powdered with dust from head to foot; a knapsack on his back, and a quantity of ribbons streaming from his hat. Sometimes he looked wobegone, and blubbered; sometimes he whistled cheerily, and was defiant, and drunk. This was Jean Pierre, or Gros Guillaume, the conscript who had drawn a bad number, and was trudging to the regimental dépôt. Frequently, on coming to the base of a steep hill, the diligence would stop, and the conducteur, coming to the coupé door, would politely invite them to descend. Then they would have to walk up hill, toiling after the diligence, for half a mile or so;

but there were no wild flowers by the way. There were loathsome beggars instead, who, in twos and threes, dotted the highway from Boulogne to Paris, flaunting their tatters, exhibiting their sores, holding up on high their cadaverous babies, and, in droning, monotonous tone, repeating: “Charité, s’il vous plait! Petit sou Anglais! Petit morceau de biscuit Anglais!” A recent change in the order of things in Paris has had, at least, one gratifying result;—the roadside beggars have disappeared.

They stayed half an hour, at five o’clock, to dine at Abbeville, where there was a noisy crowded table d’hôte. Lily could eat nothing, save a spoonful of soup, and a slice from an enormous melon which decorated the table. Five francs a head were charged for this repast, which gave the lady an opportunity of storming at Lily, at herself, and at the world, for the next twenty miles. A little way out of Abbeville, some men were singeing the bristles off a newly slaughtered pig, in a field; and the odour of this porcine suttee borne on the breeze, gave Lily a notion of incipient crackling, and made her almost hungry.

They went jogging, rumbling, clattering on, the postilion cracking his whip and screaming, and the horses, not to be behindhand, screaming too. They travelled all night; but Lily could sleep but little for the incessant jolting. At about six in the

morning they stopped at a pretty large town, where, from an inn-door, a shock-headed barefooted girl brought out to the coupé two white bowls of scalding hot coffee, with a liberal allowance of milk therein, and two huge slices of bread. Lily was able to breakfast very heartily, and, though her feet felt chill and numbed, was in better spirits by the time they arrived at St. Denis—about eleven o'clock—when she was told that they were within six miles of Paris.

The lady's temper had been throughout detestable, and she had seldom spoken to Lily, save to scold her. As they approached the capital, however, her face brightened, and, at Montmartre, she condescended to inform the child that Paris was the only place worth living in in the whole world.

"Shall we be very happy there?" asked the little girl, with a timid look.

"We?" repeated the lady, coldly. "You are going to school. Do you think I am a little *bambine*, to learn lessons and be put in the corner, *en pénitence*, as you will be if you are not *sage*? I pray you not to repeat such absurdity. There will be one Paris for me, and another Paris for you, *ma petite*."

They entered by the *Porte St. Denis*, then a barrier, where sundry custom-house officers came to the window, asking whether there was anything

to declare, and poking long spiked sticks into the luggage beneath the tarpaulin. They took away a bottle of wine from a stout lady in the intérieur, and a veal-pie from a countryman in the rotonde, the possessors of those edibles and potables having been foolish enough not to uncork the one, nor cut a slice out of the other. For, in those days, as now, everything eatable or drinkable, non-entamé, paid octroi duty, or gate-tolls, to the good city of Paris.

The diligence clattered up and down several stony streets, with no pavements, with no gas-lamps, but, instead, clumsy lanterns suspended to the centre of ropes slung across from house to house, and crowded with people who seemed to walk, preferentially, in the gutter. A great many of the men wore blue shirts above their clothes, and numbers of the women had white caps, in lieu of bonnets, on their heads. Lily thought the whole scene very unlike Stockwell.

Arrived at a large coach-office in a street called Grenelle Saint-Honoré, and in the yard of which half a dozen machines, as huge, as yellow, and as clumsy as the Boulogne diligence, were slumbering without horses, and where a score of postilions and conductors were smoking pipes and lounging about, they found another custom-house, and had to undergo a fresh examination of luggage. Then the lady's passport was again inspected, and at last

taken away from her altogether, with an intimation that she might reclaim it ten days thence at the Préfecture of Police. The lady engaged a carriage hung very close to the ground, and drawn by two little white horses, whose harness was very ragged, and whose knees were very bandy. The driver wore a glazed hat, a red waistcoat, and had a redder face.


Up and down more narrow stony streets, and then they crossed a wide and magnificent thoroughfare skirted by lofty mansions and splendid shops, with wide branching trees along the intervals of the foot-pavement, and thronged with people, and horses, and carriages.

"Oh, what a beautiful street!" cried the child. "Do look at the carriages, and the shops, and those flags; and, oh, here is a whole regiment of soldiers!"

"Beautiful!" echoed the lady, with complaisant disdain. "I should think so, little ignoramus. It is the finest street in the world. It is the Boulevard des Italiens."

But they soon left it, and dived into more streets, broader, newer, and cleaner than the filthy lanes of the old quarter of the city. Then the houses grew fewer, and the gardens more frequent, and the coachman, turning in his boot, called through the window:

"Was it the Rue de la Pépinière, or the Rue de Courcelles, the bourgeoisie said?"



"De Courcelles, ganache!" replied the Countess, addressed as *bourgeoise*.

"Thanks for the compliment," the driver, who was a good-natured fellow, replied. "Je vous la souhaite belle et bonne, madame. Am I to have anything else by way of *pour-boire*? Haho-heup! Ostrogoth of a rhinoceros!" The latter speech was addressed to one of the white horses, which was essaying to lunch on his neighbour's near blinker. And they went on again.

They reached a street where there were no houses to be seen, only a double succession of staring white stone-walls, of different heights, and, here and there, a heavy green door. At one of these doors, the number five, the carriage drew up. The coachman rang a bell which dangled by a long wire from the wall, and this was presently answered by a lad in a shabby livery, and whose face was fearfully scarred with the small-pox. Lily's trunk was alone removed, and the coachman was ordered to wait. The pock-marked lad conducted them across a dreary court-yard, in the interstices of whose stones rank dank herbage grew, up a broken flight of mildewed stone steps, across a bare hall, or vestibule, papered green, which smelt very mouldy and felt very damp, and so into a dismal saloon with an oak floor, laid in a pattern like a chess-board, and which was so highly polished, that Lily slipped on her entrance, and was very near tumbling down.

She was bidden to sit on a vast chintz-coloured sofa, and remained there, frightened, and listening to the harsh ticking of an ormolu-clock on the mantelshelf. The lady left her at the expiration of ten minutes, and Lily thought she could hear voices in an adjoining apartment. She remained on the sofa for another ten minutes, and then she heard a door bang violently. Through one of the tall windows (which reached almost to the ground) she saw the form of the handsome lady retreating across the court-yard. The shabby lad opened the door for her. She ascended the carriage. She was gone. Lily's heart sank within her. She was now left *Quite Alone* indeed.


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CHAPTER V.

LA PENSION MARCASSIN.

THE child's hand was on the handle of the lock; but it turned on the other side, and a person came in.

She was tall and shapely, and had once been handsome; but she had bidden farewell to middle age, and, without pleading guilty to imminent antiquity, would have had little chance, if arraigned, of averting a true bill. Of her good looks, only enough was left to make her angry at the remembrance of having been comely. Her hands, attenuated and long fingered though they were, retained their symmetry, and were dazzlingly white. But they were heartless-looking hands—cruel hands, more accustomed, if manual expression can be eloquent, to give buffets than to give



charity. The nails looked as though they had been bitten, not pared. Her hair, iron, not silver grey, was disposed in plain bands beneath a rigid cap of point lace if you will, but hard and spiky, as though it had been wrought out of some white metal. She was tall, very tall, and was draped in one long black silk dress, more like a pillow-case than a gown, falling in few folds, and those stiff and angular. A great cross of dull gold was at her neck, and that was all the ornament she wore. Her voice was chilly and windy. The words came as though a door had been slightly opened, a draught of cold air let in, and then closed.

"I am Mademoiselle Marcassin," she said.

She spoke in English, but with a foreign accent, fainter and harder than that which marked the speech of the strange lady. Her words fell like drops of iced water upon Lily's trembling heart.

"Stand before me, here, in the light, so," continued Mademoiselle Marcassin. "Listen to me with all your attention."

She placed her white thin hands on the child's shoulders, turned her round, and dressed her up, in a military manner, by the window. Anon she drew aside a louvre shutter, and the whole daylight came in, white and almost blinding.

"I wish you to see me very plainly," she remarked. "Look in my eyes. Mark them well. Tell me if they look soft and yielding."

Lily did mark them. She was too frightened to say what she thought, but to her mind those eyes were grey, hard, baleful, merciless.


"I am your schoolmistress," went on Mademoiselle. "You are sent here to be taught, and to be punished if you misconduct yourself. Here you will learn what discipline is. Silence!" Lily had no more idea of uttering a word than of dancing a gavotte, or setting the house on fire. "The first lesson you are to learn must be to hold your tongue.

"This is the last time," she pursued, "that I shall speak to you in English. You had better forget that I ever addressed you in that tongue. I shall address you in French when I think you have been long enough here to comprehend me, and if you do not understand, you will be punished. What do you know? I mean, what have you learned away there in England?"

With much blushing and faltering, Lily went over the scant schedule of her book-learning. Mademoiselle Marcassin heard her in contemptuous silence.

"As ignorant as a squirrel," she resumed, when the child had done, "and, I dare say, quite as restless and troublesome. Here you will be taught as well as tamed. We cannot begin too soon."

She rang a bell, and in a few minutes—passed by Lily in something closely approximating to




breathless terror—a low tap came to the door, and a lady, who looked, as to garb and demeanour, gold cross and all, a duplicate edition of Mademoiselle Marcassin, only she was somewhat younger, shorter, and stouter, came into the room.

“This,” said the lady superior of the establishment, “is Mademoiselle Espréménil, the head governess. She will take you into the schoolroom and tell you your duties. In all things she is to be obeyed even as I am. Woe be to you if you are insubordinate. Now go.”

And, without another word, she turned on her heel and disappeared. The lady addressed as Mademoiselle Espréménil took Lily’s hand, and, in equal silence, led her away.

They traversed the hall and another room, which was Mademoiselle Marcassin’s private *salle à manger*. Lily noticed that all this part of the house, though it was bare and comfortless, was very stately and polished, and had a curious pervading odour of cold stones—for cold stones have an odour—and beeswax. But when the head governess pushed aside a green baize door, and they crossed a high-walled gravelled playground, they entered upon quite another region.

Everything was barer, everything more comfortless; everything, moreover, had a squalid, frowning, prison-like aspect. From the moment Lily entered that house to the moment she left it, she



could not divest herself of the notion that she had *done something*, that she had committed some crime, and that she was in tribulation for it, under the especial auspices of Mademoiselle Marcassin and her subordinates.

There might have been twenty girls, between the ages of ten and fifteen, in the first whitewashed schoolroom they entered. It was a frightful looking room; its sepulchral whiteness relieved only by the dingy black of the transverse desks, a big black stove in one corner, from which a blacker pipe crawled along the ceiling, like a serpent, and a black board supported by a double frame—a kind of elephantine easel.

All these girls looked as though they had done something, and were much disturbed in their minds in consequence. The teachers, however, of whom there were two present, seemed to be of a contrary opinion, and to hold that they had done nothing, and did not mean to do anything, at least of what was good. For which reason they continuously girded at the twenty pupils.

"The first-class," remarked Mademoiselle Espréménil, dryly, to Lily, as she marched her through. She made the observation in a tone similar to that which a female turnkey might use in pointing out the refractory ward.

A girl with a merry face and wavy black hair could not resist the temptation, as Lily passed

her, of pulling slyly at her dress, and making (in perfect good nature, be it understood) a face at her. But the quick eye of the head governess caught the grimace in transit, and she was down on the merry one in a moment, like Thor's hammer.

"Five bad points for Mademoiselle Marygold," she exclaimed; and then, turning to the culprit, continued, "you are becoming a Rothschild in bad points. Beware of the day of reckoning."

Mademoiselle Marygold set up a whimper, as a governess—whose profile was so like a hatchet, that when she bent over the girls at their writing lessons, they were apt to feel the backs of their necks to make sure that they were safe on their shoulders—chalked five crosses against the Marygoldian name on the black board. She had a tremendous balance of black marks already in her disfavour.

"The second class room," said the head governess, as they entered another apartment, somewhat smaller than the first, but holding an equal number of scholars.


None of the girls ventured beyond a quick and furtive moment of looking up as the two passed through. At the door was a young lady aged apparently about eleven, with a very dirty face, the result of her having rubbed her countenance with inky hands, and the carbon therein having

mingled with the tears which streamed from her eyes. This young lady was on her knees in a corner by the door; and very uncomfortable in that attitude she seemed to be. There was reason enough for it, as she was kneeling on a square wooden ruler, the sharpest edge upwards, specially provided for the mortification of her flesh. And, furthermore, the young lady's head was decorated with an enormous fool's cap of grey paper, decorated at either side by lengthy bows or ears of black crape, and which gave the poor little thing somewhat of the appearance of Mr. Punch in half mourning.

"Again!" said the head governess, regarding this forlorn little personage with severe disdain. "Again, *Mélanie*! Thou goest the way for the *Prix Monthyon*, truly. A pretty *Rosière*, my faith! She is in penitence," she continued, turning to Lily. "She passes half her time in abject degradation."

Here a fresh burst of sobs came from the unhappy *Mélanie*, whose face, as it could not be much blacker, became absolutely fairer for the outbreak; for the tears traced little white channels for themselves on her cheeks till she scumbled them all together in a muddy neutral tint. They left this luckless *Niobe*, and went into another schoolroom.

It was the largest of all, and there were perhaps



forty pupils in it. But they were all very little girls—none of them older, and many younger, than Lily. Likewise there were no desks in this room, save those which served as rostra for the governesses. And the forms on which the children sat were slightly raised one above the other in a kind of amphitheatre.

“This is the third class, and you belong to it,” said Mademoiselle Espréménil, with a slight yawn, as though tired of officiating as mistress of the ceremonies to this very insignificant guest. “Mademoiselle Hudault, here is a little one to be put sur le banc des petites. Her name is—my faith! Madame forgot to tell me her name, but you will know it in good time.”

This she said in French to the teacher. She continued in indifferent English to the child,

“What your name of baptism, eh?”

“Lily—Lily Floris, ma’am,” answered the child, meekly.

“I ask you for your name of baptism, not your name of family,” interposed Mademoiselle Espréménil, sharply. “There are half a dozen Lilies in the school,” she added to her coadjutor, “and three in this class. That will never do. Never mind, Madame will find some other name to her. Elle n’est pas grand’ chose—she is not of much account—I fancy;” and she nodded to Mademoiselle Hudault, and retired, leaving Lily trembling in the middle of the class.

Mademoiselle Hudault was not ill natured, but she was over-worked. Her eyes could not be everywhere, consequently the child who was nearest her, and on whom her eyes most frequently lighted, had, habitually, rather a bad time of it; she was the scapegoat, and suffered for the sins of the rest of the forty. The forty were certainly enough to try the patience of Mademoiselle, or of any other mortal woman. Some of them were always going to sleep, and had to be shouted up into wakefulness. Others, who were day children, would creep on all fours to the corner where the baskets containing their dinners were deposited, abstract hunks of bread, bunches of grapes, or morsels of cold charcuterie—generally strong in the porcine element—and essay to munch surreptitiously behind their books or slates. Then detection followed, and there was a disturbance, and the contraband provisions were seized, and Mademoiselle Hudault would threaten to confiscate “la totalité,” or to put the whole of the class “en pénitence.” Add to this the fact that the majority of the pupils who had lessons to get by heart were in the habit of repeating their tasks to themselves in a monotonous drone—that when a band of small disciples was called up for “répétition,” there was sure to be a book lost, or a page in an essential part torn out—that Julie was always making complaints against Amanda for pinching her, and that the bitter lamentations of Eulalie in consequence of Hor-

tense having crammed her left ear full of slate pencil, were well-nigh incessant—that the atmosphere of the class-room was close almost to stifling point, and the odour exceedingly unpleasant—and that Mademoiselle Hudault's sole assistant in teaching and managing the forty girls was a depressed young person of sixteen, who was a little deaf, and somewhat lame, and was understood to be maintained out of charity by Mademoiselle Marcassin, and it may be judged how far the mistress of the class was over-worked, and that her nightly couch was not a bed of roses.

Mademoiselle Hudault, who spoke no English, made signs to Lily to sit at the extremity of the form nearest her, and there the child crouched in half-listless, half-alarmed quiescence. The strange noise confused her, the heavy drowsy smell sickened her. She was very tired and shaken by her journey; she had eaten nothing since the morning; the class-room began to swim round; then all faded into a murky haze, and she fell into a trance that was half sleeping and half swooning.

She revived to find herself in a little pallet-bed, in a long low hospital-like room with whitewashed walls. On either side, as far as the eye could reach, were more pallets, and over against her, stretched in interminable perspective, a corresponding line of white ghastly-looking couches.

There was somebody at her pillow. It was the

merry young lady with the wavy black hair, who had pulled her dress and made a face at her, and who had been apostrophised as *Mademoiselle Marygold*. No sooner did Lily open her eyes than this young lady proceeded to kiss her on both cheeks with great heartiness, bidding her (to Lily's delight), in English, lie still for a dear, and she would soon be well.

"You're English, and I'm English," quoth the merry young lady, who spoke with extreme rapidity, as if to make up for lost time, and compensate for the many hours during which she was compelled to hold her tongue. "And *Madame* (that's *Mademoiselle Marcassin*), but we call her *Madame*, although she's never been married, to distinguish her from the rest of the governesses, who are all old frumps, and *Mademoiselles* of course. We're both English, and as you can't speak a word of French yet, *Madame* says I'm to take care of you, and tell you things, and sit by your side in the third class till you're able to get on by yourself. And oh! what fun to be in the third class, and I'm going on for fifteen, and I shall escape that horrible first class, with *Mademoiselle Glaçon*—*icicle's* her name, and *icicle's* her nature—and *Ma'mselle Espréménil*—we call her the hippopotamus—bothering us all day long, to say nothing of *Madame*; and when she comes in there's always a blow up. And now tell me all about yourself,

my little darling. I'm seven years older than you ; but we're the only two English girls in this jail of a place—and it *is* a jail, and worse than a jail—and we must be great cronies."

Here Miss Marygold paused : less, it is to be apprehended, for want of matter than for want of breath. Lily's answer had to be given very slowly and very feebly, and its tenor was mainly confined to an inquiry as to how she came there, in broad daylight, and in that bed ?

"You weren't very well, and dozed off like ; and you couldn't understand when Ma'mselle Hudault told you to wake up, and that she'd box your ears if you didn't ; Madame don't allow it, but Ma'mselle can't help her temper sometimes ; she's not such a cross old thing as the others, but she's always in a hurry, and that makes her hasty, and then one of the girls reminded Ma'mselle that you couldn't speak French, and another said you were ill, and then they threw some wine-and-water (out of one of the day-girls' bottles) over your face, and you didn't wake up, and so, as you couldn't walk, you were carried up to this bedroom, which is Dormitory Number Three, and the doctor came and said you would do very nicely after you had had some sleep and some soup, and I'm to sleep next to you ; and, upon my word, here comes Annette with the soup, and it's as nasty as ever, I do declare !"

The plateful of soup which a bony female servant, with a tall white cap, and a yellow silk handkerchief crossed over her breast, brought to the bedside, was certainly not nice. It was very hot, and thick, but it had a sour smell.

"Beans, cabbages, and tallow," remarked Miss Marygold, in contemptuous disparagement of the potage. "That's what we're fed upon at the Pension Marcassin, with cold boiled horse and vinegar-and-water to make up. You'd better eat it. Not eating your soup is called rebellion here. Madame says that Atheists and Voltaireans alone refuse to eat their soup. What, can't you eat it? Well, it must be swallowed, somehow, and to keep things quiet and comfortable, I'll eat it myself."

The which she presently proceeded to do, swallowing the nauseous compound in great gulps: not assuredly through greediness, for she made many wry faces as she ate, but apparently fearful lest some emissary of authority should discover her in the act. Annette, the gaunt servant, looked on in silence, and seemingly not in disapproval. She was not the cook, and she knew how very nasty the soup was. Nay, when Miss Marygold had carefully scraped up the last spoonful, and returned the plate to her, Annette produced from the pocket of her capacious apron two slices of bread, pressed close together upon an intermediate layer of plum

jam. This dulcet sandwich, she expressed by signs, was to be eaten by Lily, and, indeed, the child needed but little persuasion, for, though her gorge rose at the soup, she was half famished with hunger.

"Annette's a good sort," went on Miss Marygold, when the gaunt servant, with a grin of satisfaction at Lily's returning appetite, had departed, "and never tells tales. We should be half starved if it wasn't for the bread-and-jam, for not half of us can eat the nasty messes they serve up in the refectory. I think the girls who have got money pay her to bring 'em nice things, and then she's a kind-hearted soul, and gives away out of her profits to the poor ones and the little ones."

Lily said that it was very kind of Annette, and emboldened by the kind merry face of her companion, ventured to ask if it would soon be tea-time?

"Tea-time!" echoed Miss Marygold. "Bless you, my pet. You'll never see any tea here. Why, only princesses and duchesses drink tea in Paris. Ma'mselle Marcassin has tea once a month, when the Abbé Chatain comes to catechise the girls, and prepare them for their first communion. Are you a Catholic, dear? I'm not, and Ma'mselle Espréménil says I'm a heretic, and Ma'mselle Glaçon says that out of the pale of the Church there is no salvation, and the girls tease my life

out, because I don't cross myself, and don't believe in purgatory; and when Madame has tea, Annette says she makes it with boiling orange-flower water, and puts rum into it, and honey, and barley-sugar, and chocolate drops, and all kinds of nasty things. Tea! You'd better forget all about tea. We have hot milk and bread in the morning at eight, and vegetables, cheese, and wine (that's the vinegar-and-water I mean), at twelve; that's called breakfast number two; and at five o'clock—it's just half-past now, and the clock was striking when Annette brought you the soup—we have that horrible stuff you couldn't eat, or another soup that's worse, and some meat that's either half raw or half burnt, and potatoes messed up in all kinds of funny ways, and some salad that's never fresh, and that's all till the next morning. Tea! Not if Madame knows it."

Miss Marygold paused again for respiration. Her lungs replenished with a fresh supply of oxygen, she informed Lily (who lay very quietly in her bed, soothed though fatigued, and with a smiling face upturned towards her companion) that her name was Mary Marygold, for shortness called Polly; but that the diminutive in question was only made use of in England, and that here Mary Marygold being considered tautological, and there being many Marie-Jeannes, Marie-Claudes, Marie-Françoises, and Marie-Louises in the school, she

was customarily addressed as Mary-Gold, as though the one-half were her christian name, and the other her patronymic.

"And a poor neglected Marygold I am," she continued, shaking her wavy hair. "My father was a rich man. He had a beautiful large book-seller's shop at Exeter, down in Devonshire, you know; but he failed in business. He was what you call bankrupt, though he paid fourteen-and-sixpence in the pound. And then we came over here: I and pa, and my little brother Joey. And Joey died in the cholera year, ever so long ago. And he's buried in the Fosse Commune, the poor people's grave at the Montmartre Cemetery.

"All pa's money was gone," she went on, wiping her eyes. "He got work as a printer in the office where they print the English newspaper—Galig-nani's Messenger they call it. But he couldn't keep it, through his eyesight being so bad. And now he's a kind of parish clerk to an English chapel in the Champs Elysées, where you and I will go on Sundays, my darling; and he picks up a little by interpreting, and showing the museums and places to English travellers stopping at the hotels. Poor dear pa, he has a hard job to get along! He placed me here at school as an articulated pupil at three hundred francs a year, and it's as much as ever he can do to pay it; but I learn as much as ever I can, and I've been here two years and a half, and when my time's out, which will be in another eighteen

months, I shall get a situation as a governess and help pa, and we shall be very happy and comfortable. Dear old pa! I don't tell him how badly I'm treated here, for it would make him fret, and he'd quarrel with Madame, or take me away, and I don't know half enough yet, even to be a nursery governess, and it would be a dreadful thing."

Again she took breath.

"You see," she resumed, "I try to learn as much as ever I can, and they do certainly teach you a lot of things here, and Madame is awfully clever. They say that she was a nun, years ago, and broke her vows at the Revolution. But I am always getting into scrapes. I can't help it. I'm merry, and it won't do to be merry here. If you want to get on, you must be grievous. I can't be grievous, and I'm continually in trouble. If it wasn't that I was wanted just now to take care of you, I ought to be in solitary confinement on bread and water for two days, for having got a hundred bad marks in the course of two years. Those I got for pulling your dress just made up my hundred. I'm always in arrear with half a dozen tasks, always in disgrace. I'm too big to be put en pénitence with the fool's cap on; but I'm had up almost every day to Madame's cabinet to be scolded out of my wits. I tell you, my dear, Madame's tongue hurts much worse than a ruler over your knuckles. Oh! I'm a ~~most~~ unhappy Marygold!"

And so she went rambling on, only too de-

lighted to find a listener who could understand the gist of her complaints.

"And you, dear," she suddenly said, "who sent you here? Your papa?"

"I don't know anything about my papa," returned poor Lily. "They could never tell me anything about him at Mrs. Bunycastle's. I think he must be dead, and in Heaven. I am *Quite Alone*."

So she was, God help her.

"And your mamma? You must have a mamma, you know, or, perhaps you are an orphan. There are four girls here who are orphans."

"I'm sure I don't know," little Lily responded, shaking her head dubiously. "The lady who brought me here said she was my mamma, but she was unkind to me, and frightened me. You oughtn't to be frightened of your mamma."

"Oh, I don't know that," interrupted the Marygold. "I used to be, dreadfully."

"Was she unkind, then?"

"No!" returned the girl, compressing her lips as though she had a great deal to say that was disagreeable, but was wishful to reveal only so much as was absolutely necessary. "She was worse than unkind. She drank, and was the ruin of poor pa. Don't talk any more about her. She's dead, and pa forgave her, as he, poor dear, hopes to be forgiven. Not that my pa's done anything to be for-

given for. He's the best of men. But we're all sinners, you know, dear. And now—oh good gracious me! you mustn't talk any more, for I've got two pages of the *Morale en Action* about that stupid old Monsieur de Montesquieu and the Marseilles boatman—it's a horrible book, and I don't believe a word of it—to learn by heart before bedtime. Taking care of you isn't to save me altogether, you see."

She turned to a much dog's-eared edition of the interesting work she had mentioned; but her assiduity in study very soon came to an end.

"No papa! No mamma that you're certain about!" she repeated, with a perplexed look. "Why, my poor dear little innocent darling, you *must* be quite alone in the world."

"Indeed I am," said poor Lily. She did not sigh. Children seldom sigh. Suspiration is an accomplishment to be learnt, like curtseying. But her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Never mind, dear," the Marygold continued, pressing the child's hand. "We must make the best of it. You must belong to somebody, to have been sent here at all. Do you know whether you are to be brought up as a governess?"

No; Lily had not the slightest idea on that topic. As yet, she had not fathomed the possibility of anybody being "brought up" to the profession of tuition. She had a dim notion that

governesses grew, or came at once to maturity, with black silk dresses and sour looks.

"It seems to me," remarked the Marygold, "that there are a great deal too many governesses in the world. I forget how many hundreds of millions of people the geography says there are on the earth; but, as far as I have seen, all the old girls seem to be governesses, and all the young girls are being brought up to be governesses. Madame turns 'em out here by the dozen, like cakes. Where the children are to come from that we are all to teach, I'm sure *I* don't know."

Not much progress was made in the study of M. de Montesquieu's transactions with the Marseilles boatman. The girl went prattling on to the child, and telling her she must call her Polly, and that she, Polly, would call her Lily, and that they would be as happy as the arrangements of the establishment and the severity of Madame would permit. And then it grew dusk, and at about nine o'clock, when forty girls came trooping silently to bed in Dormitory Number Three, Lily fell off into sound and refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ONLY CITY OF THE WORLD WORTH LIVING IN.

PARIS, dear, delightful, inimitable, unrivalled Paris, city of delights, city of art, and taste, and luxury; of fashion, and elegance, and wit. Paris, unapproached among earth's most delicious haunts. Paris, queen of the world. Paris, the only city of the world worth living in.

Certainly. This is the refrain to a very old song. You and I, and everybody else, have been singing it, always heartily, and with a kind of sincerity, never ad nauseam, ever since per railway or per diligence we first set foot in Lutetia the Beloved. There is no need to renew in mature age the vaccination we have had in our youth. The Paris virus, once imbibed, is not to be eradicated.

Of course Paris is enchanting. Everybody knows it; everybody says it. One may toil and grow rich and die in London; one may drag on an existence at Vienna, vegetate at Brussels, prowl through the year at Florence, be bored at Rome, hipped at Venice, terrified at St. Petersburg, stupified at Berlin, excited at New York, soothed at Boston, deluded at Dublin, intoxicated at Edinburgh, astonished at Seville, amused at Milan, occupied at Amsterdam, fatigued at Naples, absorbed at Manchester, salted at Liverpool, cured at Brighton, and killed at New Orleans; but if one wants to live, to see life, to enjoy life, to make the most of life, there is clearly no place in the world for man or woman but Paris.

This is an assertion scarcely worth arguing upon. Opinions are unanimous. Of course there are no bonnets in the world worth the Paris bonnets. The Boulevards are unequalled among streets. Nobody knows how to cook, out of the Palais Royal. No pictures worth looking at are to be seen out of the Louvre, except, indeed, those at the Luxembourg. Why pursue a theme so trite? While I, a single Englishman, am dully sounding the praises of Paris, fifty thousand Germans, Italians, Swedes, Russians, Poles, Czechs, Moldo-Wallachs, Montenegrins, Magyars, and Mussulmans, are crying out that Parisian life is the life of lives, and that the only city worth living in is Paris.

Lily Floris lived in Paris for seven years. Until she was fifteen years of age, she never passed that gloomy porte cochère in the outer wall of the Pension Marcassin. It was her penitentiary, her prison-house; and a terrible one it was.

There was a vast playground; and in it, when she was not under punishment, she was privileged to walk. Beyond its precincts she never stirred. She never went home for the holidays. The vacations at the Pension Marcassin were three days from the Jour de l'An, the first of January, to the fourth—a week at Easter—a month from the first of August to the second of September. These holidays came and went for seven years, but she remained immured. She had seven years' penal servitude. When the girls were away, long tasks were set her, and these she learnt and wrote, and repeated or submitted to Mademoiselle Marcassin, or, in her absence, to the governess left in charge. It was a dreary probation, and she was Quite Alone.

Lonelier when, at the end of the second year of her captivity, Polly Marygold took her departure. The girl could not refrain from sundry ebullitions of joy at her deliverance from a school of which she was weary, and from a schoolmistress whom she hated, but she was nevertheless unfeignedly sorry to leave Lily.

"It's like deserting you in a desert island, my

darling," she cried, as she kissed her and kissed her again, on the well-remembered morning of her going away; "or, rather, it's like leaving you in a savage country full of cannibals. For cannibals they are here, and nothing else."

"But you will write to me, Polly? You will, won't you, my dear?" poor Lily replied, twining herself round the neck of the only friend but one she had ever had in the world. "Oh! say that you will write to me, that you will come and see me, or I shall break my heart. I am so very very lonely."

"I know you are, my pet. I wish to goodness you were coming with me. Who knows! Perhaps they'll turn you out as a governess some of these days. Although," she continued, with a profoundly sagacious look, "my own opinion is, that you are heiress to immense estates and vast wealth, in England, and that some wicked wicked people are keeping you out of it. Think of their changing your name, too, the cruel wretches!"

"But you will write, Polly, won't you; you know you promised to?"

"Yes, my darling," returned Miss Marygold, with a touch of sadness in her voice: "I'll write, but goodness knows whether you will ever get my letters. Madame will 'sequesterate' them, or I'm very much mistaken. As for coming to see you, the cross old thing will never let me darken her

doors again, I'm certain. She has spent my premium, and got all she could out of dear pa, and it's very little she cares about me now. I wonder whether they paid a premium with you, or so much a year!"


And so, Polly Marygold took her merry face and her wavy black hair away, and the world became indeed a desert to Lily. Polly had obtained a situation as governess in the family of a French nobleman, in Brittany. It would be a relief, she said, to find some children who were to be brought up as ladies, and not as governesses.

It has been said that Lily's very name had been changed. Not much stress was laid upon her retaining or bearing her christian name of Lily; only, as Lilies were numerous in the school, she was never so addressed in the class-room. But her appellation of Floris was rigorously condemned, and she was informed that henceforward she was to be Mademoiselle Pauline. It did not much matter. Lily felt as though she had no longer a name at all. Once, going up into a great store-room where the girls' boxes were kept; she found that "Miss Floris" had been painted out from the well-remembered trunk with which Cutwig and Co. had fitted her out; and she burst into bitter tears, less at the thought of the social extinction with which it was sought to visit her, than at the recollection of the two hours passed in the old City shop where

Mr. Ranns and 'Melia were so kind to her, and where Cutwig and Co. fitted out all the world.

Often, too, she thought of that tall gentleman who had kissed her on the forehead at Greenwich, and talked to the strange lady in the balcony. The minutest circumstance connected with the dinner dwelt steadfastly in her mind. She could see the splendid old gentleman with his chains and rings, and his fringe of white whiskers; the military gentleman with his black stock, dyed moustaches, strapped-down trousers and spurs; she could hear the laughter, and the clinking of the glasses, and the wine gurgling; the warm odour of the viands came up gently again to titillate her sense of smell. She could see the grey Thames water, the lagging barges, the ships slowly sailing across the field of view, the Essex shore in the distance, the ruddy sunset behind all. But the tall gentleman who had held her between his knees, and filled her plate at dinner, and fondled her, was salient and prominent above all these things. His hair, his clothes, his kindly drawl, his pitying eyes, his hands, so strong-looking yet so tender, were all present to her. And the more she thought of him, the more she wept; but why she wept, she could not tell.

Then would pass before her a terrible image. That night in the park. How soft and calm the scene was. How happy and peaceful the deer seemed. With what quiet cheerfulness the distant



lights, in the hospital wards, in the houses of the town, in the rigging of the ships, twinkled! But then the fierce and angry words of the strange lady came up in grim contrast, and marred all this tranquil loveliness. Lily remembered how she had gripped her arm, and looked upon her with darkling, lowering eyes. And she wept no more; but shuddered.

Now, all had changed. Great gulfs yawned between the few and troubled episodes of her young life. The last was the gloomiest, dreariest, strangest of all. She was in Paris, the city which the strange lady had declared to be the only city in the world worth living in.

This was Lily's Paris:

To rise before it was light in winter-time. To be mewed up till breakfast in the dark schoolroom, nine-tenths of whose area were icy chill, and the tenth red-hot from the dead baking lowering presence of the stove. To brood over lessons, lessons, lessons, from half an hour after eight until twelve, then to crowd into the refectory for the second breakfast. Then (if haply she were not under punishment) to wander into the playground till two. Then to fag at lessons, lessons again, till five. Then, once more to flock into the refectory to dinner. Then, after another hour's wandering in the playground, if it were fine, or cowering in the schoolroom if it were wet, to go through an

hour's hideous torture until bedtime—a torture which was called “the study hour”—a time when the girls were supposed to be meditating over the tasks of the day which had just passed, and speculating over those of the morrow which was to come—a time when neither books, nor papers, nor slates were allowed; but when absolute and immovable silence was enjoined, and the movement of a hand, the shuffling of a foot, the turning of a head, was punished by bad marks—when a cough was penal, and a sneeze intolerable—when if a girl, rendered desperate by this excruciating command to be mute, would sometimes break silence *coûte que coûte*—ask some irrelevant question, make some incoherent remark—she would be sentenced to “hold her tongue” for a quarter of an hour—to hold it literally, taking the offending member between her thumb and forefinger, and striving to retain her hold upon it with the most ludicrously lamentable results of slipperiness—when, if another girl, as would often happen, dropped off to sleep, she would be doomed to stand on one leg for five minutes, and so, in drowsiness that was not to be subdued, would doze off again, and stagger, and come at last to the ground,—to be, to do, and to suffer all these things were among Lily's first experiences of the only city in the world worth living in.

She was miserable, and she had cause to be

miserable. The governesses did not so much dislike as they contemned her. It was put about publicly by Mademoiselle Espréménil, as upon authority from the chief, Marcassin, that Pauline, or "la petite Anglaise," was poor, and all but friendless; that she was being "elevated" almost through charity; and that the sphere in which she now moved was much superior to that to which she had been hitherto accustomed. Lily could not disprove these malignant innuendoes. She could not but admit the probability of the schoolmistress knowing a great deal more about her than she knew about herself. So she let them have their way, and suffered in silence. Her schoolmates were not slow to take up the cue dropped by their instructresses. None of the big girls petted her. There were no rich girls in the school. The elder pupils were mostly in training to be governesses, and toiled too hard to find time for petting any one. If wealth engender laziness, it is not unkindly to the cultivation of tender-heartedness. A rich old maid not over pious, is about the pleasantest and most generous soul alive. 'Tis poverty, griping galling grinding poverty, that makes spinsters harsh and sour.

Children are often apt to be pitiless. They have not felt enough pain themselves to compassionate its endurance by others, and they are frequently eager to inflict agony, of the scope and purport

whereof they are ignorant. Lily had scant mercy shown her. At first her companions took to pinching her, pulling her hair, treading on her feet, and administering chiquenaudes, or fillips with the thumb and finger, on her cheeks. She bore with these for a time, but at last her temper and her English spirit got the better of her, and she bestowed so sounding a slap on the back of the biggest of her tormentors, that the rest retreated, like a herd of frightened fawns, to a remote corner of the playground, crying out that "*la petite Anglaise*" was dangerous. French children are proficient in the minute details of bodily torture, but they do not understand baculine arguments of the broader kind. French girls don't slap, French boys don't fight with one another, and French children are never beaten by their instructors. Jean Jacques Rousseau and the French Revolution definitively banished stripes and blows from the educational curriculum of Gaul.

So being somewhat wary respecting overt acts of violence towards the "*petite Anglaise*," her school-mates shunned her. She was left alone with her tasks, and her wretchedness, and herself. But for a natural sweetness of mind and gentleness of nature with which the poor child had been gifted by Heaven, she might have grown up sullen, morose, and selfish. There would have been a hundred excuses for her learning to hate her

species in general, and school-girls and governesses in particular. But it was mercifully decreed otherwise, for Lily was made for love. She found, indeed, that those among whom her lot was cast would not, through disdain and prejudice, love her; but she was saved, through her own innate suavity of soul, from falling into the other and perilous extreme of loving herself. Still, she found it necessary to have something to love. There were no dogs or cats about the place to fix her affections upon. Rabbits, squirrels, white mice, silkworms even—all the ordinary domestic menagerie of children—were prohibited in the Pension Marcassin. She was too old to make friends with spiders, with the rapid lizards, with the beetles of sheeny armour. No sparrows ever came into the playground. Small birds are rare in Paris. So, in default of something tangible to love she elected to build up a world of her own, and to people it with creatures of her own imagination, and to dwell among them, and love them very dearly. Her world was totally at war with Mercator's projection. It was a very puerile Utopia, the most frivolous of Formosas, a highly babyish New Atlantis—a silly nonsensical world, if you like; but she believed firmly in it, and her devotion to its inhabitants was unbounded. If she were punished, somebody in the Ideal World came to comfort her, and to show her a clue to work her way out of the

labyrinth of a tangled task. If she were unhappy, she was invited to festivals and pic-nics in the Imaginary Land. There she danced; there she sang; there she went to the play; there she romped and skipped; and there, I am afraid, she often went to the water-side to dine on beautiful dishes of fish. But there was no noisy company there; and the strange haughty lady was not one of her company. Only she and the tall gentleman sat at the table, and afterwards went into the balcony to gaze upon the ships, and the long line of the Essex shore, till the sun went down, and it was dark, and the lamps began to glimmer. Silly Lily.

In this great school she was the only captive thus rigorously confined. The other girls went out on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons for long walks. On their return they told her superciliously about the Elysian Fields and the Wood of Boulogne, about the Garden of Plants and the Museum of the Louvre. At Easter they talked of masked balls to which their brothers went, of *débardeurs* and *pierrots*, of the mad revelry of the carnival, of the fat ox promenading the Boulevards and Hercules leading him, while carriages full of gaily-attired maskers followed the bedizened beast. These joys were not for Lily. She was to be kept under, and in.

Only one thing was wanting to complete her wretchedness, and that came at last. Madame

seldom spoke to her alone. When she made her periodical tours of inspection through the classrooms, Lily incurred an augmented share of reproof and bad marks at her hands; but she was seldom summoned to the presence of the Marcassin. It happened, however, one afternoon, in the fifth year of residence, that she was commanded to repair to Madame's cabinet.

The "cabinet" was a square comfortless apartment, not unlike a refrigerator in its chilly atmosphere and light wooden fittings. The Marcassin was the ice in the refrigerator, and froze all who approached her. In the "cabinet" she collated the register of the young ladies' studies and conducts, and made disparaging marginal notes thereon. At her tall desk in the "cabinet" she drew up the alarming "memoirs," or half-yearly bills of the pupils. To the "cabinet," offenders of more than ordinary turpitude were doomed to repair, to undergo the anguish of prolonged and solemn reprimand. Finally, to the cold grey and white papered wall of this cabinet was affixed an enormous framed and glazed pancarte of pasteboard, bearing, in elaborate French engrossing, and with many flourishes, in which the forms of swans, eagles, and griffins preponderated, the names of the pupils of the establishment who had distinguished themselves from six months to six months by assiduity in study, or propriety of conduct. This placard was

called the "Tableau d'Honneur." It was renewed at the commencement of every fresh half-year; and a rumour ran through the Pension Marcassin that M. Lestiboudois, the writing-master, received no less a sum than one hundred francs for executing it in ornamental caligraphy.

Lily stood, her hands meekly folded, her head decorously bent, her feet well set together—"position de recueillement humble et attentive," as it was set forth in the codex of disciplinary etiquette observed in the Pension—before her instructress.

- She was mentally wondering of what misdeed she could have rendered herself guilty during the past week to merit a summons to the refrigerating cabinet.

"Fille Floris, called Pauline," said the Marcassin, sternly, and no longer deigning to give Lily a title of courtesy, "you and I must have some conversation together. The affairs have been going on too long in a deregulated manner. They must be regulated now, in a manner definitive. Do you hear me, Fille Floris?"

She spoke in French now, and Lily understood her well. The girl could speak the lively language fluently—so fluently, that she sometimes found herself thinking or addressing the people of the Imaginary Empire in French, and as often discovered her tongue tripping and stumbling when she essayed to sing some little English rhyme of old times.

The Marcassin slowly unlocked one of the drawers in her tall bureau, and took forth two packets of neatly folded papers. One packet was slim and sparse, the other dense and heavy.

"Do you see this, Fille Floris?" she resumed, in a cold and bitter tone, pointing to the slim packet. "One, two, three, four, half-years' memoirs, bills for your pension and education, and which have been duly paid by the persons who placed you here. And now observe." She untied the other packet, undoing with a vengeful wrench of her teeth an obstinate knot in the string which confined it. "One, two, three, four, five, six—three years' memoirs—nearly three thousand francs for your pension and education; and not one centime of those three thousand francs have been paid. Do you hear me?"

Lily heard, and turned white as her name.

"Three years, then," pursued the pitiless Marcassin, "you have been eating bread and drinking wine to which you have no right. Three years you have been living on my charity. Pale, impertinent, worthless, insubordinate"—poor Lily!—"you have always been; and I have been often obliged to tell you so; but not till this moment have I informed you that you are a pauper and a beggar. Who are the robbers and felons who have left you here to impose on my credulity, and fatten on the fruit of my industry? Speak, little impostor."

"Oh, madame, madame!" the girl urged, tearfully, "I'm not an impostor. It is not my fault. Madame knows much more than I do of the persons who brought me here. I was such a little girl then. I have always done my best, and tried to learn, and to be good. Oh! don't reproach me with what I am innocent of; for I am quite, quite, alone."

"Insolent!" retorted the Marcassin. "You will reason, will you? Ah! it is I who will bring you to reason. Tell me instantly the names of the swindlers who owe me three thousand francs."

"Indeed I don't know, madame. How can I tell? From the day I was brought here, I have never had a single letter, a single visitor, a single friend, except that dear Mademoiselle Marygold, who is gone."

"You dare to mention the name of that rebellious and ungrateful girl to me?" interrupted the schoolmistress, with a furious look. "Allons! It is of a piece with your other impertinence."

Lily could only sob and wring her hands in reply.

"The very clothes you have on your back have been paid for or renewed by me these two years past. You are a burden, a pest, an incumbrance to the school. It is by fraud that you have learnt the piano, the dance. You have robbed me of lessons in drawing and geography. Why do I not

give you up to the police for the escroquerie of your parents—if you have any parents—little miserable, who ought to have been put into the crèche of the Enfants Trouvés? Why do I not send you to the Dépôt of Mendicity? Tell me, little beggar brat!”

In a bodily as well as a mental rage at last, which was strange with this frigid woman, she rose and seized Lily by the shoulders and shook her. The terrified girl fled into a corner of the room, too much alarmed to shriek, but trembling and holding her hands before her face.

Mademoiselle Marcassin resumed her self-possession. She was a coldly logical lady, and recognised the inexpediency of a personal conflict with a pensionnaire whose only fault was that her friends had neglected to pay her half-yearly bills. Besides, she knew that the charges she brought against the girl of being “idle, impertinent, worthless, and insubordinate,” were groundless. There were few girls in the school more studious than Lily, and there was not one better conducted.

She sat down at her bureau again, replaced the packets in the drawer, and locked it. “A truce to these absurdities,” she said. “No harm has been done you. Let us have no more whimpering, or we will see what effect the atmosphere of the wood-cellar—la cave au bois—and two days’ bread and water will have upon you. Come for-


ward, and stand in front of this bureau, and listen to me."

Lily came forward as she was commanded. She hastily dried her eyes, and stood before the Marcassin, pale, but composed.

"People who eat bread must earn it," remarked the schoolmistress. "Don't think I am going to keep you—pour vos beaux yeux—for your own sweet sake. If you continue to live here, you must work. Are you ready to work?"

"Yes, madame, as hard as ever you wish me."

"We shall see. If I sent you away from here, your destination would be the Préfecture de Police. You have no domicile, no papers, no name even that offers reasonable proof of identity, and I question whether the consul of your nation would be at the trouble of reclaiming you. The woman who brought you here—I wish I could catch sight of her, la vaurienne!—spoke English, but she was French. She told me you had been born in France. Thus, all the police could do for you would be to send you to a house of correction—a penitentiary, understand me well—where you would be confined till you were twenty-one years of age, where you would be kept all day, either kneeling on the cold stones singing psalms, or working your fingers to the bone with needlework, under the tutelage of the good grey sisters who have little machines and leathern thongs to keep their correctionnaires in order.



Lily's heart sank within her. She had heard appalling stories of the severities practised in the Maisons de Correction—stories which, in justice to the good nuns who conduct those establishments, must be branded as apocryphal. Could they be worse stories than Lily might tell of the Pension Marcassin?


"You may remain here," continued the Marcassin. "But on a different footing. You are no longer a pensionnaire, but a fille de classe. You will do what you are told, and learn what you are permitted, and will make yourself as useful as common gratitude for being fed, lodged, and clothed should render you. We will say nothing of the arrears for your board and education. If I cannot discover the swindlers who have cozened me out of my money you and I will have some future conversation on the matter. Now you may go."

CHAPTER VII.

AN ABBÉ.

LILY went into the cabinet of Mademoiselle Marcassin a young lady pupil at a boarding-school. The social status was not a very dignified one ; but, at all events, it was something. The profound gentlemen who compile the census tables would have thought Lily worthy to be registered as a single item in the educational schedule. She entered the cabinet a school-girl. She came out of it a hybrid creature, something between a servant-of-all-work and a galley-slave.

Mademoiselle Marcassin kept her word to her, after a fashion. Lily was fed, lodged, and clothed, after a fashion. That is to say, she was privileged, after the pupils had fed, to consume the scraps of their repast—her refectory not being the common



dining-room, but a side place, half pantry, half store-room, where not only the copy-books, slates, drawing materials, and such-like, required by the young ladies, were kept in stock; but likewise sacks of lentils and haricot-beans, and large jars full of the peculiarly nasty stewed pears which were unchangeably served at the conclusion of the principal meal under the generic title of "dessert."

She was lodged—but not in any of the dormitories. She had a room to herself (a hole rather) in the roof, where she had a mattress on the floor, and an ewer and basin on a rush-bottomed chair. The Marcassin was too rigorously just, to suffer her to share in the sleeping accommodation provided for pupils who paid; the Marcassin was too kind, after a fashion, to degrade her by forcing her to associate with the other servants. She was clothed, too, was Lily, after a fashion. Cast-off garments, mostly of the rag-and-tatter description, were flung to her from time to time, to be mended and cobbled together, when her own rags gave signs of dropping off piecemeal.

She was permitted to pursue her studies, after a fashion. When there was no particular slavery in hand, she was suffered to sit in the class and listen to the lessons. Neither bad marks nor good marks were given her. She was beyond these. If she, alone of a class, could answer a question,

she was not privileged to take her competitors up. She remained, for good or evil, at the bottom.

She helped about the house. She cleaned knives sometimes. She combed the younger children's hair. Sometimes she made beds. She never scrubbed—for the scrubbing-brush was an institution unknown to the Pension Marcassin. In French housekeeping there is a tradition that dry polishing is a holy thing, but that hot water does harm. Lily's special task-work, however, was in the lingerie, or wardrobe of the school. She passed many hours there every evening. There was always an immensity of mending to do, and most of it fell to her lot. As she was not allowed to touch the piano, for fear of wearing out the keys; or to draw, because crayons cost money; or to write, because paper and slate pencil are expensive; her fingers might have grown stiff and awkward but for the compulsory lissomness they acquired in that everlasting needlework. She grew to possess astonishing dexterity as a sempstress.

Once a year, all the mattresses in the establishment were ripped up, the wool taken out, and, compressed into cakes as it generally was by continuous pressure, carded, by means of iron teeth set in wooden slabs, into fresh stuff. Two prodigious old women, hoarse voiced and hairy chinned, who looked as though they had been horse-grenadiers in the Imperial Guard who had

taken to petticoats in their old age, used to come to card those mattresses. They were paid two francs a day, and their keep. Lily was permitted to help them. The dust and flocculent particles of the wool half choked her, but she carded as well as she could. One of the old women used to bring a stone flask full of corn brandy with her, from which she frequently gurgled into her old mouth what she called "*la goutte du bon Dieu.*" The other would persist in smoking a short pipe in the intervals of labour, much to the disgust of the Marcassin; but the old woman worked cheaply and expeditiously, and so was not denied her narcotic. Lily was dreadfully afraid of both of them. They spat and swore, and were like men.

"I remember," would one of these woolly Chevaliers d'Eon say—"I remember, *La Mère Boustifaille*, when the little King of Rome used to be wheeled about the Tuileries Gardens in a little carriage drawn by two Astracan sheep."

"And the Duke of Bordeaux, *Ma'me Plumet*," would the other say. "*Diantre!* was he not baptised in water from the Jordan? Do you remember the Terror, *Ma'me Plumet?*"

"If I remember it? Imbecile! Was I not dancing at the Opera when Messieurs of the Committee sent for me to be one of the nymphs that marched by the side of the car of the Goddess of Reason? Ah! yes, I have not had bad chances

in my time," and this she said with a horrible leer at Lily. "I have had cashmeres and diamonds in my time. But I have had misfortunes. It has all been through my devotion to the Emperor. That accursed minister of police would not give me a bureau de tabac because of my sympathies. When I asked for a box-opener's place at the Funambules, they told me that I was a Bonapartist. Why not call me a sorceress at once? And now I am come to carding mattresses at forty sous a day, and my soup. Bah!" And the old woman would expectorate and take another pull at the "goutte du bon Dieu."

They called Lily "c'te jeunesse," and laughed at the clumsy way in which she carded. One of them, La Mère Boustifaille, talked to her one day—it was in her second year of carding—of her beauty, and asked her why she buried herself in that place when she might have cashmeres and diamonds? Lily shuddered as she heard, without comprehending, the hag. Her ears burnt, but her lips were cold. Of all the bad people in this bad world there is nothing, I apprehend, worse than a bad old Frenchwoman.

Lily Floris—"c'te jeunesse"—"la petite Anglaise"—or the "fille de classe Pauline," as she was indifferently called, was fifteen, and shapely, and fair. She thanked God every night in the simple English prayers which had been taught her

by Barbara Bunnycastle, that she did not hate any one. She prayed for strength to continue obedient, industrious, and uncomplaining. But hers was a hard time—a very hard time.

To the rest of the school-girls, in the days when they condescended to converse with her, she had been a heretic. They told her that she was doomed to eternal perdition because she did not go to mass and cross herself. They were incredulous as to heretics believing in anything save Satan—and not much in him. As a heretic, she was not allowed to accompany the other girls on Sundays and fête days to the neighbouring church of St. Philippe du Roule. As a heretic, she was necessarily excluded from the periodical catechisings, admonitions, and exhortations, which took place prior to the yearly festival of the First Communion.

There were generally twenty or thirty girls every spring to take this first communion. They looked inexpressibly peaceful, innocent, beautiful, in their white frocks and veils, their snowy wreaths and spotless gloves, their little white silk stockings and shoes, their bouquets of white flowers. Lily used to look after them with longing eyes as they filed through the playground on their way to the entrance-gate. She was sorry that she was a heretic; but was she one, and, if so, was it her fault?

She thought, one day, that she would ask the Abbé Chatain. He was "directeur" of the establishment. He catechised the young ladies, and confessed them, and generally prepared them for the first communion. He was a tall lean ecclesiastic with a bronzed visage, very high cheekbones, a square jaw, broken teeth, somewhat jaundiced eyes, and iron-grey hair. In his long black soutane, black rabat with white cambric edging, heavy shoes with buckles, flapped hat, and portentous umbrella, he had seemed for years to Lily an awful and forbidding personage. He took a great deal of snuff too, and when he blew his long bassoon-shaped nose with a blue cotton handkerchief, the sound was awful. He had a manner of breathing hard, too, when he spoke, and of screwing up his eyes, and clattering his jagged teeth, the reverse of encouraging. Yet the girls said that the Abbé Chatain was amiable, and forbore to visit the little peccadilloes they acknowledged in confession with any unusually disagreeable penances.

It was a long time before Lily could make up her mind to speak to the abbé. As a heretic, the ecclesiastic kept aloof from her; and she, too, dreaded that her addressing him might be an act open to misconstruction.

One day, however—it was during the August holidays, and the abbé had called to pay a visit of

politeness to the Marcassin, who, being indisposed, could not receive him—Lily clothed herself in the full armour of a desperate resolve, and sought him out. The worthy ecclesiastic was pacing up and down the playground, snuffing and waving the blue cotton pocket-handkerchief in a contemplative manner, as usual. One flap of the skirt of his cassock was drawn up, displaying a not unsymmetrical calf, and in this traditional clerical coquetry it may be that the artful arrangement of hooks and strings, known as “ladies’ pages,” originated.

Lily stole up to the clergyman, and was about to address him; to her dismay, he suddenly produced a book from his pocket. “Alas,” she thought, “the abbé is going to say his breviary, and he will be walking up and down the playground for at least twenty minutes without my daring to speak to him, and then, perhaps, Madame, who is lying down, will awake, and the abbé will be called in, and my chance will be gone for ever.”

To her relief, however, the book was not a breviary. It was doubtless a devout work, but not of so strictly canonical a nature. Indeed, the doctrine it contained seemed not only of a comforting, but of an exhilarating order, for the abbé, wagging his head approvingly, and following the text with an appreciating forefinger, would ever

and anon emit a gleeful chuckle. It was a merry book, and the abbé was no sour ascetic.

"He is a droll of a farceur," murmured the abbé, "this Monsieur de Béranger, although he has written some bitter things against the reverend fathers the Jesuits! What do you want, young girl?" he added, suddenly, and throwing, accidentally of course, the hand which held the book behind him, but still keeping the page open with appreciative forefinger.

"If you please, Monsieur l'Abbé——" poor Lily began.

"But I do not please," the ecclesiastic rejoined, sharply. "I have nothing to do with you. You are not a catechumen. You do not belong to my class. Go to your minister. I can have nothing to say to you. Enfin, que me voulez-vous."

"Oh! Monsieur l'Abbé, do pray hear me," the girl pleaded, joining her hands, and her eyes beginning to stream, "I am so truly, so miserably unhappy."

"By your own fault, I take it, young girl," remarked the abbé; "the worthy Mademoiselle Marcassin—a true shepherdess to her flock—reports you as being obstinate, rebellious, opinionated, recalcitrant. Kindness and severity have been tried, and both in vain, to you. Go to your minister—are you an Anglican or a Puritan?—and demand of him what prayers and penitence you should re-

sort to, in order to enter into a better frame of mind."

"But I have no minister," cried Lily, despairingly; "I have no friends, I have no home. I am quite alone in the world. I am a poor little English girl, left, abandoned, deserted here by cruel strangers. I am destitute, and an object of charity. I have never been outside these walls for seven years. I strive my best to be good, and to learn, and to work, but I am always punished and made miserable. Oh! I am most wretched and helpless."

"Tiens," muttered the abbé, taking out the blue cotton handkerchief and wringing the bassoon nose, but without the bassonic sonorousness, "this has the appearance of being pitiable."

"Oh, sir; dear, kind Monsieur l'Abbé, if you would only intercede for me; if you would only soften Madame's heart towards me! If I could only be sent back to England, perhaps the good ladies with whom I was at school when a very, very little girl, near London, might know something of my friends."

"It is hardly possible," said the abbé, not unkindly, and shaking his head. "Madame has told me under what circumstances you are here. Perhaps the wicked people who imposed upon her, likewise robbed some mistress of a school *là-bas*, down there in England, when you were an infant.

Have you no other friends that you can remember, however faintly?"

Lily hesitated for a moment. How could she name Cutwig and Co.? Old Mr. Cutwig had given her a new shilling, and Mr. Ranns (on account of the Co.) a Noah's Ark, and 'Melia a kiss; but this acquaintance of two hours' duration could scarcely, with propriety, be called friendship. And then she thought of the braided and whiskered man on board the boat, who had given her "joggo-late." Could he be called a friend? Alas! no. Finally, her thoughts reverted to the tall gentleman who had been so kind to her at the Greenwich dinner. She had never forgotten him. A thousand times she had thought of him with gratitude and affection. Many and many a time, pining and shivering in her wretched bedchamber, she had asked herself: "Shall I write to him? He told me his name. It was William—Sir William Long. Shall I write a letter to Monsieur Sir William Long, England, and pray him to come and help the poor little girl he was so kind to, ever so many years ago? But who would post a letter for me? If it were discovered, I should be sent to the cave for a week. And, besides, he has forgotten me. I only amused him for a moment. He is married and happy." And poor Lily, as she thought this, found herself burning with blushes and choking with tears.

No, she could not give the name of Cutwig and Co., nor of the man with the braid and the beard, and a strange shame and nervousness prevented her naming him whom she yet vaguely believed to be her friend. She told the abbé, with dolorous meekness, that she had no friends, so far as she knew, anywhere in the world.

“*Pauvre petite !*” said the Abbé Chatain, taking out the blue cotton handkerchief again. “What, then, can be done for you ?” he resumed, after a brief silence.

Lily could tell him that, and eagerly, too. She had been brooding over and elaborating a feeble little scheme for months. “Oh !” she cried, “if Madame would only be kind and merciful to me, she could make me happy, I am sure, at once. It would not be at all difficult. Thanks to the instruction I have received at the Pension—and oh, pray believe that I am very grateful for it—I know enough, I hope, to undertake the duties of a nursery governess, or at least I could be an under teacher in a village school. Or I would work at my needle, or wait at table, or do housework, or anything, if she would only allow me to leave this dreadful place, and be kind enough not to tell everybody that I am wicked and rebellious.”

“You are full of romantic ideas,” replied the priest, after cogitating for some moments over Lily’s audacious proposition ; “but we will hope

for the best. Go in peace, my child, and do not cry. I, myself, will speak to Mademoiselle Marcassin on this topic, and we will see what can be done."

He patted Lily gently on the head, and strode away. And the girl returned to her needlework, and, for the first time since Polly Marygold left the Pension Marcassin, a golden ray brought daylight and hope streaming into her soul.

The abbé was as good as his word. An evening or two afterwards, while he was playing his modest game of backgammon with Mademoiselle Marcassin, he took occasion to say, as though inadvertently:

"And the little English girl you have succoured and cherished, how goes it with her?"

An evil look came over the countenance of the schoolmistress. "How goes it? As with a viper. Speak to me of the gratitude of those Islanders. I calculate that I have lost by that little crocodile at least five thousand francs, of which I shall never see a red liard. And yet I have been a second mother to her."

It was certainly something in poor Lily's favour that she had been blessed with a second mother, seeing what a remarkably unsatisfactory investment the first one had proved to be. The abbé, however, received Madame's statement with a pinch of salt, as well as with one of snuff. He knew the

Marcassin of old, and was acquainted with her aptitude for magnifying her own merits and depreciating those of others: when she would allow them, which was but seldom, to have any merits at all.

"It is a pity," carelessly remarked the abbé, putting the caster to his chin, as was his wont, before he flung the dice, "that you should be burdened with this little eat-all and do-nothing."

"It is more than a pity, it is a shame, a scandal, an enormity, an abomination," Madame indignantly acquiesced. "Figure to yourself, my dear abbé, that this most reprehensible young person of fifteen years of age—well grown, too—devours my substance. She devours the little patrimony which I hope to be able to leave, some day, to my kindred in Touraine. Such a great girl is not to be kept on walnut-peelings."

"That is easy to see," the diplomatic abbé agreed.

"They may keep her who will," the school-mistress continued, with well-simulated indifference. "I am sick of the charge, and should be enchanted to be relieved from it."

"Would you, then, consent to her departure?"

"Who would pay me my memoirs, if you please?" the Marcassin returned quickly.

"But if you have lost, as you say you have lost by this time, all hopes of payment?"

"That is true," returned Madame, shrugging her shoulders. "As well fish in the canal for whales as expect that I shall ever re-enter into my funds."

"And if you placed this embarrassing young creature in some locality of which you were well assured, and with persons at whose hands you could at any time claim her?"

"That is true; but how to find such a locality and such persons?"

"They must be numerous. Could you not obtain a situation for her in a school, half as pupil teacher, half as *fille de peine*?"

"She is that already, here; more of one than the other." Mademoiselle did not specify which was the "one" and which the "other."

"And the convent?"

"Impossible. She is a heretic. The government is infidel and Voltairean. We should have complications with the police."

"But you say that she has no papers, no recognised identity."

"I tell you, abbé," exclaimed the Marcassin, "that she has nothing, save the spirit of the Fiend which animates her. She is as friendless as a mountebank's tumbling child, bought for forty sous at a fair, and passed on from one juggler to another."

"Pauvre petite!" murmured the abbé again; but his voice was pitched low.

“Besides,” resumed the schoolmistress, “if she went to another school, she might chatter—and——”

She stopped, somewhat confused, and, the game being over, hurriedly closed the backgammon-board.

“I understand you,” the abbé returned, with a nod. “There is much rivalry in the scholastic profession. One always tries to do one’s neighbour—when one’s neighbour keeps a school—as much harm as is possible. ’Tis pity, for charity’s sake, that it should be so. But suppose, my dear and worthy lady, that I was enabled to find, out of doors, an asylum for this forlorn child—a safe asylum, a respectable asylum, a discreet asylum—whence, from time to time, I should be enabled to bring you news of her, and whence, if the dishonest persons who have defrauded you of your hard-earned money were ever brought back to better sentiments, and showed a wish to make restitution, you could bring her back. Suppose some such scheme to be within my power of putting quickly into execution?”

“Then, my dear abbé, I should say at once, Take her.”

“Is that your determination?”

“You have my word for it.”

“Then we will adopt measures in accordance. I shall have the honour shortly of communicating with you on the subject. Not another cup of tea,

I assure you. I have fears for my head. Well, qualified with this excellent and sanative rhum of the colonies. Have you tasted the Chocolat de Santé, my dear lady? And the Racahout des Arabes? No; you prefer the Pâte Regnault. A thousand wishes for your happiness! We will consider the affair of la petite as arranged. Figure to yourself this Monsieur Véron, who makes one fortune by managing the Opera House—what a scandal—and another by selling cough lozenges. And yet, I am told, a most excellent person, and devoted to the Church. Yes, I will certainly remember to bring the six numbers of the Gazette de France when next I have the honour. One might get the little wardrobe of la petite together. She has none, you say. Well, one must be found for her. Charity is not dead, as you, mademoiselle, have so triumphantly proved. Once more, dear lady, good night!”

These remarks were not delivered without a solution of continuity. The abbé's valedictory observations were scattered about the room. He had to swallow another cup of the curious fluid which Mademoiselle Marcassin imagined, with many other French ladies of that period, to be tea. He yielded to friendly compulsion, and partook of another modicum of the colonial liqueur. Then he had to find his umbrella and his shovel-hat, and to press Madame's hand, and to bow over it, and to accept

some jujubes for his poor cough, and to suffer Madame with her own fair hands—literally fair, but not cruel, to him—to tie a woollen scarf round his neck, as a defence against the night air.

It was all as innocent, I speak without mental reservation, as sheep-shearing in Arcadia. Nothing could come of it. Both were stricken in years. On both, the doom of perpetual celibacy weighed: he, enforced to it by vows: she, sentenced to it by circumstances and by temperament. Yet I have heard that the sun shines sometimes at the North Pole; and I believe that a little flirtation is a little flirtation all the world over. Believe me, had the fiend who tempted the good St. Anthony come to him, not in the guise of a ballet-girl, but as a cozy comfortable spinster of a certain age—a spinster who would have knitted muffatees, and made wine possets, and warmed his slippers, and cut the leaves of his Tablet for him—the hermit would earlier have turned his eyes upward from his tome.

One sigh—one among a thousand frowns—is not many. Mademoiselle Marcassin gave one sigh, and put away the backgammon-board and the rum of the colonies.

“Pauvre cher homme,” sighed the Marcassin; and then she froze up again in one block, and proceeded to make her nightly tour of her dormitories, scattering bad marks about her on all the pupils

who could be proved to be awake. For wakefulness was considered presumptive evidence of the offender having been indulging in prohibited converse.

"A worthy lady, the Dame Marcassin," the Abbé Chatain mused as he sped homeward. "She errs a little, perhaps, on the side of strictness, but those young persons are difficult, very difficult, to manage. I remember at the seminary what trouble I used to give the proviseur and the régisseur, and what stripes of the discipline these shoulders have suffered. Hi! But it must be admitted that Mademoiselle Marcassin is a woman who has a character. Oh! her force of character is immense. And she is conscientious, highly conscientious. We must see whether we can persuade Madame de Kergolay to shelter this poor little shorn lamb."

And the abbé went home to bed. He was a worthy soul;—although he did sometimes read Béranger's poems on the sly.

"If he had only been on our side, Monsieur de Béranger," the abbé was wont to say, "what an ally he would have been! What a colossus! But it has always been thus. From the days of M. de Pascal, we have never been able to keep the drolls who have wit and humour, on our side. And yet we have educated them all in our seminaries. They have bitten the hand that fed them. If M. de Molière, now, had only written *Tartufe* against the

Huguenots! History of fatality. It is true that we have M. de Chateaubriand—mais il radote—he drivels. That rum of the colonies was very toothsome. To-morrow is a fat day, and Madame Prudence” (his housekeeper) “has promised me a turkey stuffed with chesnuts. C’est éniurant, that turkey stuffed. A little glass of that rum of the colonies would make an excellent pousse-café. Ah! here we are at home. Let us enter.”

It has been found, not unfrequently, that enforced celibacy leads to a partiality for roast turkey stuffed with chesnuts. Cut a man off from the flesh, and he clings to the flesh-pots.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE OF THE ABBÉ.

A VERY few days after the interview recorded in the last chapter, the Abbé Chatain had another conversation with Mademoiselle Marcassin. On his departure he met Lily (who had, indeed, tremblingly, but purposely, thrown herself in his way), and, patting her on the head again, told her to be of good cheer, for that a change in her condition was imminent. Lily went, that day, to her needle-work, and her knife-cleaning, and her bed-making, quite radiant; and at night, nestling in her shabby pallet, she peopled the Imaginary Land with all kinds of benevolent ecclesiastics and philanthropic protectors.

Her deliverance came upon her with delightful suddenness. According to the abbé, it might be a

week or a fortnight before the arrangements that were being made in her behalf could be carried out; but, as her good fortune would have it, the very morning after she had received this hopeful announcement, and as she was sitting, in her usual Cinderella position at the bottom of the class, the Marcassin herself entered the schoolroom in full state, and proclaimed to Mademoiselle Espréménil that Mademoiselle Floris, no longer "la fille Pauline" or "la petite Anglaise," had been "called to other functions."

"Circumstances," the Marcassin took occasion to say, "which did not perhaps imply deliberate culpability on the part of Mademoiselle Floris, had rendered her position one of somewhat a painful nature." Goodness knows, it had, and of the pain-fullest! "Indeed, she might say that her education and sustenance, her very vestments, in fact, had been provided by a person whom it was unnecessary to name." Here the governesses looked admiringly at the Marcassin; the pupils all stared at Lily; and the poor child herself blushed a deep crimson. "However, this equivocal state of affairs had now come to an end. Thanks to the efforts of a worthy clergyman (*digne ecclésiastique*), an asylum had been found elsewhere for Mademoiselle Floris. In the new sphere to which she was about to be removed, she would doubtless preserve a lively recollection of the favours and bounty


which had attended her sojourn in the Pension Marcassin."

There were murmurs (*rumeurs*) of approbation among the scholars; and the head governess remarked, in a low tone:

"If she does not preserve that lively recollection, she is a monster of ingratitude."

"The conduct of Mademoiselle Floris," concluded her benefactress, "had not been entirely free from matter for animadversion. The veil of the past, however, might now be thrown over the anxieties—she might say, the sorrows—she had caused her instructresses. Mademoiselle Floris left that establishment full of the best sentiments; and she, Mademoiselle Marcassin, was glad to recognise that this young person was calculated in every way to do honour to the Pensionnat where she had been sheltered."

The young ladies, most of whom had been for years spectatresses of the daily tasks and punishments inflicted on the scapegoat of the school, and had grown perfectly accustomed to hear her called worthless, insupportable, and incorrigible, by the schoolmistress and her assistants, were not in the least surprised to hear this virtual eulogium pronounced on Lily. It was the Marcassin's way. Nil nisi bonum was her invariable maxim, as applied, not to defunct, but to departing scholars. It was a remarkable fact that no young lady, however



refractory or stupid she might have been, ever quitted the academy without a glowing panegyric on her conduct and proficiency. The supreme punishment in the Marcassin's code of pains and penalties was expulsion; but she had only been known to expel one single pupil. The dismissal of this culprit took place on the eve of the summer vacation; and it was quite notorious that her parents designed to remove her to another school.

The Abbé Chatain did not come himself as the messenger of Lily's deliverance. The welcome emissary was his housekeeper, Madame Prudence. She was a rosy apple-cheeked old dame, the best cook, and, moreover, the possessor of the best temper, in the quarter. She loved her abbé very dearly, tended him very assiduously, and scolded him sometimes; but that, like the cunning dishes she cooked for him, was all for his good. Madame Prudence was not an admirer of the Pension Marcassin, nor of its energetic proprietor. She spoke of Madame as "*cette Mégère*." She alluded pointedly to the governesses as "*myrmidons of the tyrant*." Her opinion regarding the pupils was, that they were oppressed slaves. She had been known to snap her fingers at the entire establishment, in the open playground, and in the light of day. There was an old feud between her and the Marcassin; and she did not, perhaps, altogether approve of ecclesiastics, bound to bachelorhood,

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being regaled by scholastic spinsters with tea, with backgammon, and with the rum of the colonies.

The priest's housekeeper, like the schoolmistress, was unmarried; but both were called "Madame," probably from the reason that to a people who had always retained an infinite veneration and deference towards age there seemed something unduly familiar and flighty in the appellation "Mademoiselle." When we were a less civilised, but a better behaved people, we too used to address our spinsters as "Mistress."

On the way from the Pension to her new home—when, to Lily's infinite delight, they traversed on foot the streets of the only city in the world worth living in, with which she had made but ten minutes' acquaintance in the course of seven years—Madame Prudence was pleasantly loquacious, and made no secret of her impression that she had been the immediate means of rescuing Lily from the jaws of a roaring dragon.

"They would have devoured you there, my child," she remarked, patting Lily's arm affectionately, as she trotted along by her side. "I know her well, that stiff and starched piece of affected tyranny. Ah! it is I who have given her a bit of my mind. It is not I who am afraid of her. A woman with an ascertained position, quoi!" The last part of these observations Madame Prudence evidently applied to herself; and she as

evidently considered the "position" of a priest's housekeeper to be, so far as respectability went, a much better "ascertained" one than that of a schoolmistress.

"And you were very unhappy, eh, my child," she continued, "down in that hole?"

"Oh! dreadfully unhappy," replied Lily. "Many and many a time I could have wished to die, only I knew the wish to be wicked."

"And no wonder. And they were cruel to you?"

"Madame was certainly very strict — almost harsh; but I dare say I was stupid and disagreeable, and gave her much trouble."

"You? I won't believe it for an instant. M. l'Abbé says that you are a little lamb for meekness and resignation. To me you shall be a little angel. The good Madame de Kergolay, whither you are going, has already made up her mind to treat you like a little kitten. Ah! it is there you will dine well, and when you come to dine with the abbé and me, you shall have a taste of *my* cookery; you shall taste la vraie cuisine bourgeoise, my cherished. Are you fond of good dinners?"

"It is so long ago," answered Lily, with a smile, and in involuntary disparagement of the culinary dispensation enjoyed by the inmates of the Pension Marcassin.

"I should think so. I know what those croco-

diles feed you poor little innocents upon. Haricots, haricots, haricots, all the year round, as if you were mules, and only deserved to be fed upon beans. And the lentils! And the chicory! I would not mind if they knew how to cook them; but they don't, the Cosaques!" A Cossack was Madame Prudence's synonyme for everything that was mean, base, and cruel. "And the wine, or rather the water blushing at being so villanously adulterated! Ah! the good Madame de Kergolay will make you taste of the good little vintages. You will be as happy as the day is long. You will help Madame at her embroidery, and sing to her, and read to her, and play her to sleep; and then the abbé will play backgammon with you. I shall not be jealous, ma mignonne, and on Sundays and feast-days I will come to you, and we will go to the mass together."

"I am a Protestant," interposed Lily, gently.

"A Protestant! que' q' c'est qu'ça?" quoth Madame Prudence. "Ah! I know—a Huguenot, a dissident. Well, you must read Monseigneur the Bishop of Meaux upon the Reformists. Ah! the great man Bossuet. And then, my faith, you must go to your temple, and hear your minister. Madame de Kergolay seeks to make no proselytes. Many of her kindred are dissidents. I have known a good many honest folks—très gentils même—who were of the Lutheran profession. M. l'Abbé is

Gallican and tolerant. That wicked old giraffe, the Marcassin, is ultramontane, and breathes nothing but sulphur against heretics. She would make a furious Grand Inquisitor. Voyons! I can't see why Protestants should burn. Le bon Dieu meant nothing to be burned, except candles and wood for the kitchen fire."

Thus sociably chatting, the abbé's housekeeper led Lily through the streets of the only city in the world worth living in. The modest package of clothing which the Marcassin had persuaded herself to part with as the wardrobe of Mademoiselle Floris had been sent on before by a commissionnaire.

CHAPTER IX.

LILY IS ACTUALLY AT HOME.

ONCE more Lily traversed the up-hill pavement, and marvelled at the great rolling turbulent gutters in the roadways : gutters which in those days often bore on their inky bosoms the carcasses of defunct cats and dogs, that rolled past, swift and supine, towards the Infinite reserved for the beasts.

Once more she saw the clumsy oil-lamps slung on ropes across the streets, and smelt the faint odour of the melons and peaches, and the quicker aroma of the grapes from the fruiterers' shops. The way was by back streets, where there were few brilliant shops, full of gold and silver and jewels, and rich dresses, and beautiful pictures. But to the timid little hermit, just escaped from her thralldom, the narrow dirty streets of old Paris

were ineffably charming. The great dishes full of wet partly-cooked spinach, like green mortar, in the greengrocers' shops; the giant pumpkins at the doors, some cleft in twain, and disclosing a voluptuous mine of golden squash and seedfulness within, that looked like the heads of grim Paynim warriors stricken off by the two-handed swords of doughty Crusaders; the eggs boiled in cochineal (as Madame Prudence explained) to make their shells red: "*c'est pour distraire l'œil, mon enfant;*" the long strings of dumpy little sausages, the shapely pigs' feet cunningly truffled, as though they had corns defiant of the skilfullest chiropodist; the other wonderful preparations of pork at the charcutiers'; the butchers' shops, with their marblé dressers and gilt iron railings, and their scraggy but lively coloured show of meat; the glaring sign-boards; the dazzling show of pewter pitchers in the wine-shops; the ticket-porters dozing on their trucks, with their shirt-collars open, disclosing their shaggy, vein-corrugated necks; the throng of little boy soldiers with vacant faces and red legs; of priests in shovel-hats; of policemen with swords and cocked-hats; of moustached old women, very like the two Fates who came to card wool at the Pension, trolling monstrous barrows full of fruit or vegetables; the water-carriers with their pails; the alert little workwomen with their trim white caps whisking along with their skirts thrown over one

arm; the wonderful poodle-dogs with tufted tails and curling manes, like pacific lions of a smaller growth; the liquorice-water seller with his pagoda at his back hung with bells and banners, and his clean napkin and arsenal of bright tin mugs; the woman who sold the jumbles, and the man who sold metal taps; the wandering glazier with his cry of "Vitrier-e-e-e-er!" the old clothesman, no Jew he, but a stout Christian, who looked as though he had spent a good many years travelling in Galilee, and had begun to waver in his faith somewhat, crying, "Vieux habits, vieux galons!" the very beggars and blackguard little boys in torn blue blouses, who splashed in the gutters, or made faces behind the backs of the cocked-hatted policemen; all had charms for Lily. She could not help observing that most of the surrounding objects—animate as well as inanimate—were exceedingly dirty, and that the atmosphere was heavily laden with tobacco-smoke; but the entire spectacle was charming to her, nevertheless.

By-and-by, in the wane of the afternoon (for they had walked leisurely, and Madame Prudence had met several acquaintances, the majority bearing large baskets from which the stalks of vegetables protruded, or the heads of fowls dangled, and who were manifestly of the culinary calling), they crossed the great roaring Boulevard—which the housekeeper told Lily was an ocean of wickedness,

and to be avoided, save on feast-days, when the good people came out as well as the bad—and entered a maze of streets much wider and cleaner, but much quieter. There were few shops, but many white walls, seeming to stretch onward for miles, and relieved only by jalousied windows and heavy *portes cochères*. Lily's heart sank within her. All looked older; but then all was as still and as gloomy as the stark and sepulchral suburb of Saint Philippe du Roule.

"Does the good lady—does Madame de Kergolay—keep a Pension?" she asked, nervously.

Madame Prudence could feel the little arm quivering within her own, and patted it again, reassuringly.

"Courage, my child!" she said, with a merry laugh. "Why, we have not the boldness of a guinea-pig. We have done with Pensions for good. No more classes, no more *haricots*, no more tasks and penitences, no more *Marçassins*! A Pension, my faith! Madame la Baronne de Kergolay—a baroness, mind you, of the old stock, and not one of the day before yesterday—is a lady of ancient extraction, high rank, and ascertained position in society. She has had misfortunes, cruel and bitter misfortunes, but sooner than keep a Pension and suck the blood of young children, she would stand and sell matches at the corner of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Yes, my child; suck

their blood! That is what the Marcassin does. She is a real Count Ugolino."

A considerable period had apparently elapsed since Madame Prudence had perused the works of Dante. Lily, however, knew quite as little about Count Ugolino as the housekeeper did; and the assurance that Madame de Kergolay did not keep a school was quite sufficient for her.

The baroness lived in the Marais, in one of the tallest and oldest houses of that tall old quarter. It was a red brick house, too: almost as great a rarity in Paris as a stone house is in London. The entire mansion, Madame Prudence took care to inform Lily, belonged to the baroness: but she let it out in flats to respectable tenants, and reserved only one floor, the third, for her own use.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE MARAIS.

IF Madame de Kergolay had lived on a third floor in London, the altitude of her dwelling-place would have been accepted as *prima facie* conclusive evidence of her impoverished circumstances. But indigence, in Paris, does not necessarily correspond with the number of stairs you have to mount to your abode ; and, although the baroness's apartment was *au troisième*, it was spacious, comfortable, and even elegant.

Madame Prudence was short-winded, and, as she toiled up the staircase, uttered sundry invectives against a certain "Satané" asthma which troubled her. The Abbé Chatain would not have failed to reprove her for using so naughty an adjective ; and of this eventuality Madame Prudence seemed her-

self aware, for, on the second landing, she objugated the asthma with bated breath, and apostrophised it only as a "Cosaque." But she was very glad to rest awhile on this penultimate flight, while Lily gazed with admiration through an œil-de-bœuf casement on the vast panorama of slated roofs and chimney-stacks which stretched around and beneath her. The sweetly-savoured smoke from the wood fires curled in delicate violet hue against the clear blue sky; and the distant melody of a piano—played not as a school task, but for pleasure, for the instrumentalist carolled a lively ditty as he sang—came and smote her very sweetly on the ear. It was a simple matter to be pleased with, yet Lily felt as though she could have clapped her hands, and sung back again. Poor little creature! she had seen so little, as yet, of the only city in the world worth living in.

"I should like," she said, in airy prattle to her new found friend, "always to live here, and look through that window. See, there is a woman hanging out linen on a roof. Oh, if there were only some birds. There used to be birds at Miss Bunnycastle's."

"Bird yourself," rejoined the good-humoured housekeeper. "Silly little chatterer, you'd soon get tired of your bird's-eye view, I'll warrant. Yes, yes, there are better things to be seen within. Come! My respiration is a little restored. We will ring at the good lady's bell."

A lively piece of sculpture, in the likeness of a horse's forefoot, hung at the end of a silken cord by the side of a door whose central panel exhibited a brass plate, and, thereon, in very spiky and attenuated black letters, the words, "Madame la Baronne de Kergolay." Lily felt a slight tremor when she read "Baroness." The remembrance of a former "Countess" was rather conducive to a conviction on her part that she had had enough to do with titles of nobility for the term of her natural life.

A withered old man, very diminutive but with a very large head, and perhaps the thinnest pair of spindle-shanks ever seen out of a museum of anatomical preparations, opened the door, and grinned in a hospitable manner at the new comers.

"This is my brother Thomas," said Madame Prudence, introducing the little old man, "although you will oftener hear him addressed by his little name of Vieux Sablons. He is twenty years older than I; but in his youth was a furious gaillard. Even now il fait des farces. He is as upright as a dart, as strong as Hercules, and sain comme mon œil."

Thomas, otherwise Vieux Sablons, grinned so extensively while these praises were being bestowed on him, that, in the mind of the timid, some fear might have arisen respecting the permanent cohesion of his superior and inferior jaws. This time,

however, no divorce between the upper and lower portions of his head took place. The grin subsiding into a smirk, he shut the outer door behind the visitors, and ushered them into the interior of the premises.

Lily remarked that Thomas's large head, though quite bald on the summit, and very scantily furnished with thin locks about the ears, was plentifully powdered. He wore, moreover, earrings: at which, I take it, an English Jeames would have been astounded, if not scandalised. He was habited in a green livery coat, short in the waist, and shorter in the tails, shortest of all from a proportional point of view in the cuffs, and ornamented with a shoulder-knot of tarnished silver bullion. It was a coat worn to the very shabbiest, and scrupulously neat, and the large plated buttons had been so often polished that the armorial cognizance on them, as on a Louis the Fifteenth franc, was well-nigh defaced. Thomas's waistcoat had fallen likewise into the sere and yellow leaf—or, rather, the leaf that is sere without being yellow, for the original hue of the nankeen which formed its texture had, through repeated ablutions, vanished. His green velvet nether garments, likewise, suggested to the observant spirit that they had originally formed the covering of a Utrecht sofa of the time of the First Empire, which had been very liberally sat upon by the beaux and belles of that

epoch. He wore silk stockings of no particular colour, and, where they were not cobweb, his hose, like the late Sir John Cutler's, were one darn. Still, any little short-comings that might have been noticeable in his apparel were amply compensated by a prodigious pair of cut steel buckles in his shoes, and by a protruding shirt-frill or jabot: so white, so starched, and so stiff, that it gave him the appearance of a piece of Palissy-ware, cleaving with distended fin its way through life, like one of poor Bernard's perch through a dish.

"He wore that coat before the assembly of notables met," whispered Madame Prudence. "He was a running footman at Vieux Sablons. He has worn l'épée au côté—the sword by his side. Ah, the glad days!"

Anon they had passed through a cheerful dining-room with the usual floor of inlaid wood, light chintz hangings and furniture, and plenty of mirrors. At each of the three windows there was a glittering cage, and in each cage a canary was singing.

"Hao! it is better than the staircase," quoth Madame Prudence, slyly.

Lily thought so, indeed, when they came to the next room, the saloon, where the mirrors had richer frames—all tarnished, though—and where there were more birds, as many as four in a cage, and a beautiful globe full of gold and silver fish, and

some stately pictures of ladies in hoops, and gentlemen with wigs and swords, and some older portraits of cavaliers in slouched hats and curled moustaches, and dames in ringlets and point lace. Here the furniture was of dark carved wood with elaborate cushions and backs in needlework.

"All Madame's doing," whispered the house-keeper. "She is an angel at her needle, but they were put together by the tapissier of the quarter. The old furniture was broken to pieces; the mirrors and the pictures my brother saved; but there's not a portrait without a bullet-hole or the gash of a knife in it, carefully mended; not a looking-glass frame but the glass itself has been smashed. What you see is nearly all that is left of the château of Vieux Sablons."

Again they went on, until Thomas, lifting up a heavy drapery of old tapestry veiling a door, tapped discreetly at it. His large head disappeared in the hangings, but he speedily withdrew it, and turned it towards the visitors with a reassuring grin.

"Madame will receive," he said. "She is not saying her breviary. Go in, my children."

Lily observed, as he retired, that, although he was as "upright as a dart," the gait of Vieux Sablons was very feeble, and he hobbled.

Madame Prudence seemed to divine the girl's thoughts.

“Yes,” she said, with pleasant pride. “Thomas is of a certain age. He is no longer in his first youth. He is eighty, and for sixty-five years, man and boy, has been in the service of the family. But he is agile. Oh! he is alert. *Ma parole d’honneur*, I think he could dance the gavotte as well as Monsieur Vestris.”

But here Madame Prudence was inwardly reminded that priests’ housekeepers have no right to be critical on the execution of so mundane a performance as the gavotte, and she was for a moment covered with confusion. She muttered, however, something about the old thoughts that had come into her head, through the presence of young people, and, pushing aside the drapery, led Lily in.

They found themselves in a neat smiling little room that was half boudoir and half bedchamber, the walls hung with antique tapestry in which shepherds and shepherdesses, brave with ribbons—for their very crooks and the necks of their sheep were hung with the parti-coloured products of the loom—were grinning as affably upon all comers as Thomas, yclept Vieux Sablons. Their smiles had somewhat faded from the stitches which years ago had been fixed in perpetual cachinnation by busy fingers now fleshless in the tomb, but they continued to grin valorously. As though there had really ever been such a place as Arcadia, as though the real names of Corydon and Phillis had not

been Colin and Margot, who had pined in rags and penury, and fed on black bread (and, when that was scarce, on boiled grass), while the beaux in wigs had been writing epigrams to the belles in hoops at the tall-roofed château yonder. As though the château had never been burnt down by Corydons and Phillises infuriated by famine and oppression. As though there had never been a guillotine erected in permanency at the Mairie, a desecrated parish church, a broken cross, and a Reign of Terror. And the shepherds and shepherdesses went on smiling, in a third floor in the Marais, as they had once smiled in the great hall of Vieux Sablons.

There were more birds in this room; and their diversified twittering was, to tell truth, somewhat embarrassing to the newly-arrived stranger. One soon grew accustomed, however, to a riot which of all riots is the most tolerable. There was a dwarfish coffee-coloured pug-dog, too, of the breed called "carlin"—a detestable little beast with a red leather collar hung with bells, and a face like that of a negro pugilist (who had lost the fight) seen through the small end of an opera-glass. This pet and treasure yapped and japped about the room, and at first seemed inclined to cultivate a hostile acquaintance with Lily's ankles—dear me! how very late in the day I am in telling you that our solitary one had begun to have ankles, and that they were very shapely—but was soon recalled

to order by a mild voice; a voice which addressed him now as "little tyrant," and now as "little cherished one."

On a cushion of tambour-work, which was moved about as the sun's rays affected different strips of the flooring, couched, grave and magisterial, and with a frill of fur like an Elizabethan ruff round his neck, a monstrous Angora cat. It was said, long ago, that no human being could ever have been as wise as Thurlow *looked*; but the impenetrable sagacity of the Angora's countenance would have reduced the chancellor, wig, seals, and all, to idiocy by contrast. The Angora cat's name was Miriflon.

In this room there was a handsome circular table of marqueterie, laden with books, with flowers, with needlework. There were cunning little green silk screens to subdue the light and the heat of the fire, which, notwithstanding the warmth of the weather, was crackling on the polished andirons of the roomy chimney. In a far-off alcove there was a bed: looking more, however, like a vast ottoman: with a faultlessly adjusted counterpane of quilted crimson silk.

By the work-table, a screen before her eyes, in a long low invalid chair, reclined a very old lady, whose hair was like undressed, but highly bleached, flax; whose lineaments seemed to have been cut in marble; whose complexion was soft and clear as

virgin wax. Her hands, Lily noticed, were as white as the Marcassin's; but they were mild hands, gentle hands, innocent hands, hands that closed only when they were clasped in prayer, that opened only to give something away. She was clad in grey silk, and a kind of laced kerchief was tied under her head. She wore spectacles, and she had not a tooth in her head; but she looked, for all that, very like a saint.

"Kiss her, my child," whispered Madame Prudence.


Lily trembled all over: and, she scarcely knew why, her eyes filled with tears. Then, by an involuntary movement, she crept down to her knees, and took the lady's hand, which was soft and glossy, and, holding it between her own, gently kissed it.

The lady disengaged her hand and patted the brown curls nestling by her.

"And so you are to be my little pet bird," she said, in a low yet silvery shrill voice. "We are very good friends already, I can see. Monsieur l'Abbé has told me all about you. You have nothing to fear here, Lily Floris."

To Lily's inexpressible delight the lady spoke English—her own pure, sonorous, native tongue; at which Madame Prudence, not understanding a word, looked on in highly critical admiration.

Madame de Kergolay smiled at the girl's ill-concealed astonishment.



"Don't be afraid," she continued; "this is not a Pension Anglaise. You are surprised to hear me speak your language. Well, it is partly mine. I am English by descent, though not by birth. My grand-nephew, whom you will see some of these days (the scamp), is English from head to foot. Yes; I come of an English family—have you never heard of the Greyfaunts of Lancashire? No, you are too young—but I was born in France. My father was exiled in the '45 for his attachment to the true king, and I was brought up by the English Benedictines—ah! the good sisters—in Paris; and when I left the convent I married Monsieur de Kergolay." She sighed as she spoke, and turned to a portrait supported on a little easel near her. It represented a handsome gentleman with powdered locks, but with a full dark moustache, who wore a white uniform coat with blue facings, and the cross of St. Louis at the button-hole. "Yes," the baroness murmured. "He was the bravest captain in his regiment, and the bravest gentleman in all Brittany. Nay, I libel them: the Bretons are all brave, and there is none bravest."

She was given to ramble sometimes in her discourse, and an unusual flow of volubility was succeeded by a silence somewhat blank. Madame Prudence beckoned Lily away.

"We will leave her a little while," whispered the good housekeeper. "She is easily fatigued. Madame is of a great age. Figure to yourself, my

dear: eighty-six. She is weak, but ah! she has the courage of a Mousquetaire Gris in her."

"She is a very beautiful old lady, and I am sure she is good," Lily said, thoughtfully.

"You are right, little seer," returned the house-keeper, tapping the girl familiarly under the chin. "Beauty like hers laughs at time. Now it is a lantern, very clear and pellucid, through which her beautiful soul shines. The abbé says that she will be asked few questions on the great voyage. Her papers are all in order. Do you know that M. l'Abbé Edgeworth, who confessed the martyr king, gave her absolution himself when, with six of her old governesses, the Benedictines, she was mounting the fatal tumbril that was to convey her to the scaffold? And it was only by a miracle she escaped."

"Poor lady," murmured Lily. "How beautiful she must have been."

"Beautiful!" repeated Madame Prudence. "Ah! her beauty has gone through rude trials. Fire and famine and slaughter, insult and torture, captivity exile poverty, and hunger. And now, with the exception of her graceless grand-nephew, she is left quite alone."

"Why, I am quite alone too," quoth Lily, simply.

"Poor little lamb! I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. There! You are to be no longer alone."

Madame la Baronne will love you very dearly, and Vieux Sablons will take as much care of you as though you were Azor the pug-dog, or Miriflon the cat, and I will come and see you whenever I can spare half an hour; and, bless my heart, here is Babette, the *femme de chambre*, who will show you the little room that is to be yours. And now, really, I must kiss you and bid you good-by, or my dear abbé will think I am lost."

And Madame Prudence, confiding Lily to the care of Babette, who was a homely woman of middle age, with a port-wine stain on her face, was as good as her word, and bustled away.

Babette took Lily into a charming little bedroom, all rustling in white dimity draperies. Ah! so different from that dreadful hole at the Marcassin's. She showed Lily a coquettish little bed, and a wardrobe where her linen and clothes were arranged; and then, to the girl's great astonishment, the homely Babette sat down on the bed and began to cry.

"Don't mind me," she said in French, wiping her eyes. "I'm not going to hate you or to be jealous of you. But I am low-spirited this morning. Je pensais après mon homme là-bas: I was thinking about my husband, yonder."

Lily could not help thinking Babette a very strange woman, but she forbore to vex her by interruption.

"Is it through——" Babette was about to say "charity," but she checked herself; "is it pour l'amour du bon Dieu that you are going to stay with us?"

Lily felt herself blushing crimson, but she answered steadily: "I am quite alone, and poor, and was very unhappy where I lived, till M. l'Abbé Chatain brought me away: and I know that Madame de Kergolay is very charitable."

The homely woman had a brawny fist. She doubled it, and brought it down with a thump on the bed.

"Charitable?" she repeated. "She's a saint. Don't think I wish to shame you. I am the lowest of the low, a creature of shame, la dernière des dernières;" and she began to weep afresh.

Lily did her best to console her, but the most efficacious balsam to be applied to a wounded spirit seemed, in the case of the homely woman, to be the doubling of her fist again. She brought it down with renewed force on the counterpane.

"Look you well here, little one," she exclaimed. "This house has more mercy in it than the Hôtel-Dieu—than Bicêtre—than any house on earth. My man, my husband, it is very certain was a villain—Claude Gallifet, called Claquedents. An abominable man. Do you see that scar on my forehead? That was where he knocked me down with his adze, as a butcher knocks down the bœuf-

gras. Observe it well. The blow went through my skull as though it had been of paper. Do you see this gap in my mouth? That is where Claquedents knocked three of my teeth down my throat. My breath is almost as short as the Dame Prudence's. But I have no asthma. I pant because Claude jumped on me, and broke two of my ribs. But I loved that man there. Do you understand?"

Lily was bewildered, and knew not what to say. She bowed her head.

"If he was bad," the woman continued, "I was bad. If he was a robber, I was a receiver of stolen goods. I tell you I loved him. Well! If he did commit the burglary by night, I helped him. I made the skeleton keys for him, and the list slippers, so that he should not be heard. *Ce n'est pas moi qui l'ai conseillé de tuer le bourgeois*," she muttered, in a lower tone, and halted, and looked at Lily, and breathed hard.

The girl was shuddering.

"The bourgeois did not die," Babette went on, gloomily. "Otherwise, Claquedents would have been guillotined. Well, they sent him to Toulon for life. He is there now, with a red nightcap, and chained to another villain. *N'en parlons plus*.

"I was tried with him," she resumed. "They were merciful to me because I was a woman, and

I had but two years' seclusion. I came out of prison to do what? To starve. 'Get up,' said the police one day. 'Lie down,' they cried the next. 'Go here, go there, where are your papers?' I had none, and no bread. I tell you I had no bread. They would not take me in at the hospital. I was so strong, they said. I had had a child. That died while I was in the prison. I begged a sou one night, and paid the toll on to the Pont des Arts to drown myself. The Abbé Chatain met me. He gave me money for a bed. He told Madame about me. I was received in an institution where saints, such as she, gather together wretches such as I. I worked very hard. I showed that I could be honest. Good God! I never stole anything but when I wanted bread, or when my man told me. At last I came here. I am housekeeper. I have the care of the plate. I could strangle Madame, who is as helpless as a child, when I put her to bed. Vieux Sablons does not know my story. The Dame Prudence, even, only knows, from the abbé, that I was poor. Nothing more. But I tell you—because you are young and have been miserable—think of me and bless God that you ever came into this house."

"And your husband?" Lily said, lifting her great eyes in wonderment to the woman's face.

"Speak no more of him," she returned. "If

he were to escape, or to be released, I declare that I would kill myself. I love him, and a month after we had met we should be at the Dépôt of the Préfecture again, for robbery. You will never hear anything more about this from me. Go! I see you are good. I am not about to be jealous of you." And Babette got off the bed, smoothed out the indentations made by her fist, and very composedly proceeded to fill the ewer from a large brass pitcher.

When Lily was left alone, she ventured to open the wardrobe, and found that the mean and patched apparel she had brought from the Pension Marcassin had been supplemented by a store of linen, morning wrappers, and other feminine gear, which, to her unaccustomed eyes, appeared inexpressibly spruce and smart. There was little finery among the stock; there were neither silks nor satins; but to the whilom Cinderella the few drawers seemed to contain the treasures of the Indies. She had never seen such nice clothes since the well-remembered afternoon when Cutwig and Co. fitted her out.


Presently came Vieux Sablons with a tap at her door, to tell her, with as conciliatory a grin as usual, that Madame would again receive her. She followed him, timidly, but with a happy reliance gradually growing upon her. Everything told her that in this house she had nothing to fear.

Madame de Kergolay bade Lily come very close, and kissed her on the forehead.

"I am a very weak suffering old woman, my darling," she said, "and constant pain makes me cross and irritable, sometimes. When I scold you (which will not be often, I hope), you must smile and kiss me. When I scold Vieux Sablons, he rubs the buttons of his coat with his sleeve; which relieves him. Formerly he used to whistle, but I prohibited that, as an impertinence. And now you must sit down on that little stool by my feet, and tell me everything about yourself. I need not ask you for the truth. It is written in your face."

It was indeed. The girl drew the stool close to the old lady's chair, and, her brown curls nestling amongst the draperies of her protectress, told, in artless simplicity, the short and sorrowful story of her life. There were no startling incidents, no romantic episodes. It was a mean, common-place little tale; but Madame de Kergolay shed tears as she listened to it.

"You have been very unhappy, my child," she began, when Lily had ended. "Let us pray that the dark days are over, and that the bright time is coming. In His inscrutable wisdom and mercy, the Almighty is often pleased to afflict most sorely those of His creatures who seem least deserving of His anger. You have had, indeed, to suffer two most terrible deprivations. No father to protect,



no mother to cherish and fondle you ! Ah ! poor little lamb ! my heart bleeds for you. But we must see what a feeble, bedridden invalid can do to console you ; yes, we must try to make you as happy as the day is long."

"There is only one thing that I am afraid of, madame," faltered Lily.

"And what is that, my child ?"

"If the lady—the strange lady—the one who was called Countess—should find me out ? If she went to Mademoiselle Marcassin's, and discovered where I was ! Oh ! it would be dreadful."

"Foolish little thing. After deserting you so long, it is not probable that she will care to inquire about you. If she be indeed your mother, she must be a cruel and hard-hearted woman—a scandal to her sex. But I cannot believe that any mother could be so inhuman. No, no ; she must be some wicked and intriguing woman, who, to further bad designs of her own, has been endeavouring to alienate you from your real parents. Let us think no more about her. Justice, divine or human, must, sooner or later, overtake a creature so abandoned. Let us indulge in hopes, rather, that some day the two gentlemen who placed you at the school at Clapham, and one of whom must have been your father, may be met with. But, until they do come forward, and under any cir-

cumstances, you are not the less to be my dear adopted child."

They had much converse that afternoon ; and an impertinent little alabaster clock on the mantel-piece had proclaimed, in a voice very much resembling the barking of a very weak little puppy, that it was six o'clock, when Vieux Sablons (who had bestowed a fresh sprinkling of powder on his bald pate in honour of the occasion) announced that Madame was served, and that dinner was ready.

Madame, alas ! could not walk to her evening meal ; but as she obstinately refused to be treated so much like an invalid as to be served in her bed-chamber, she was slowly wheeled in her chair to the *salle-à-manger*. The six o'clock dinner was one of the few links that bound her to the everyday world ; and, whether she dined alone or in company, the ceremonious announcement of the banquet was made by Vieux Sablons, and her modest repast was served up in the apartment specially provided for the purpose.

The dinner was a very simple, but a very nice one. They had a soup with bread in it, a little of the gravy beef with a sharp sauce, a couple of dishes of vegetables, a roast chicken, and some cream cheese. The only evidences of luxury were in the wine, which was a rare and odoriferous Bordeaux, and in the dessert, at which a magni-

ficent melon made its appearance. Everything pertaining to the service of the table was scrupulously clean, and of originally costly material, but everything had plainly seen better days. The tablecloth and napkins were damask, but worn to the cord, and as elaborately darned as Vieux Sablons's stockings. The plate was silver, but rubbed to the last degree of thinness. The dessert porcelain was old Sèvres, but cracked and riveted in dozens of places. Every article, in fact, from the napkin-holders to the salad-bowl, seemed to have undergone some terrible shipwreck, but to have been rescued from the wreckers' hands, and carefully put together again.

Vieux Sablons was footman, and butler, and parlour-maid. He solemnly drew the bottle of Bordeaux, and presented the encrimsoned cork on a battered little salver of silver to his mistress, who examined and dismissed it approvingly, saying that the good Haut Brion showed, as yet, no signs of deterioration. He carved the melon with a silver knife and fork in a very imposing manner, and brought on the two silver sconces containing lighted candles of yellow wax, with an air worthy of a sacristan, or of a gentleman of the chamber to the Great King.

"We do things pretty well in a third floor of the Marais, hein, little m'amselle?" he remarked,

with pardonable complacency, as he lighted Lily to her chamber.

The girl said that everything was beautifully comfortable.

"With regard to comfort," replied Vieux Sablons, slightly piqued, "I don't care about it. I know it not, the comfortable. It concerns me not. It belongs to the revolutionaries. I alluded to the style. Do you approve of it?"

Lily hastened to assure him that she regarded the style as perfect.

"That's right, little m'amselle," returned the ancient servitor, nodding his head in grave satisfaction. "We are au troisième, it is true, but still we perform our functions here in the way they were performed before the evil times. The bulk of our fortune, alas! we have lost, but we contrive to exist, and to keep up our style on crumbs. You see that our forks and spoons are still of silver?"

Yes, Lily had noticed that.

"The days have been," Vieux Sablons continued, "when I have had the honour to serve Madame and her guests entirely off silver, ay, and off silver-gilt. But what would you have? The accursed revolution has ruined all. The Gauls triumph. Poor France!"

"Poor Madame de Kergolay!" murmured Lily, softly.

"You are right, my child," said the old man. "We keep up our style, and there is that scamp of a grand-nephew, and Madame is an angel to the poor, and all upon ten thousand francs a year. And the manor of Vieux Sablons alone was once worth a million."

"A million!" echoed Lily, who had scarcely ever heard of so large a sum of money.

"A million! 'Tis I who say it to you. Now we are reduced to ten thousand miserable francs. The appointments of an employé, quoi! But I tell you what," the old man, in his thin pipe continued, clenching a trembling hand; "the day that our funds begin to fail us, and Madame says, 'Vieux Sablons, we must sell the silver, and dine with one course instead of three, or I shall have no bread to give to my poor,' that day I will beg, that day I will thief for the House of Kergolay."

"But Madame would be angry," Lily gently pleaded.

"Very well, very well. I have another resource. I will go to a bureau de remplaçants and sell myself as a substitute for one drawn in the conscription. That is a thousand francs. France always wants men; and I am strong—oh! I am strong yet. Good night, little m'amselle."

Poor Vieux Sablons! He was nearly eighty, and would not have made, I fear, a very stalwart grenadier.

CHAPTER XI.

PEACE.


LILY's life in the Marais was, for six months, peaceable, and uneventful, and happy. One day was like another, but all the days were quiet and cheerful, and they passed swiftly by. Lily rose at eight, and took Madame de Kergolay her coffee and milk in her bed-chamber. Lily read to her, over her own breakfast, the news from the only journal which was permitted to penetrate into the establishment: the Legitimist Gazette de France. Madame de Kergolay was no very violent politician, but her convictions were firm. The iron had long since been forged into steel. She spoke of Napoleon as "the too celebrated M. de Bonaparte." Whenever she alluded to Robespierre it was with a shudder, but without invective. She called him

"that miserable man." Louis the Sixteenth was, to her, always "the martyr king." Marie Antoinette, Madame was not very enthusiastic about—her career, she observed, was "equivocally tenebrous;" but she regarded the Duc de Berri as the victim of perfidy, and the Duchesse d'Angoulême as a saint. The House of Orleans, then regnant in France, she named with sorrow, but without asperity, as "the ingrates of the cadet branch." She seemed (with one exception) to bear no malice towards any of the deplorably famous characters of the revolutionary epoch. As Talleyrand did, she always spoke of the philosopher of Ferney as "Monsieur de Voltaire." She gave Mirabeau his title of count, and admitted the eloquence of Camille Desmoulins and the patriotism of Madame Roland. But if ever the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau were mentioned in her presence, her cheek flushed, and her voice trembled with indignation. "The vulture in dove's feathers!" she was wont to cry. "The sentimentalist who wreathed his murderous poniard in fine phrases. The philanthropist who would not have children whipped, and yet sent his helpless babes to the Foundling Hospital!" And for poor crazy Jean Jacques there was no charity to be expected from the Baronne de Kergolay.

About ten o'clock the lecture of the Gazette de France was concluded, and Lily was allowed to enjoy what was to her a most delightful privilege.

She went out to market with Babette, the homely *femme de charge*. At first her relations with this woman were of a slightly embarrassing nature. Babette seemed to be under a continual nervous apprehension lest Lily should think that she was jealous of her, but the girl's gentle and unassuming nature gradually gained confidence in the house-keeper's mind, and before a fortnight was over she told Lily that she loved her next to Madame de Kergolay. The convict's wife was zealously but unaffectedly pious; and she never went to market without going to church for a few minutes.

When Lily returned from market it was nearly noon, and the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, or mid-day breakfast, was served. Until two or three in the afternoon she worked at some of the marvellous tasks of embroidery which were always in hand, or else she read to Madame de Kergolay. Novels were not entirely banished from the good dame's intellectual course. The *feuilleton* novel was, it need not be said, proscribed; the wild productions of the romantic school were likewise inadmissible; and the baronne had probably never heard of George Sand or of Paul de Kock. But the genteel fictions of M. le Vicomte d'Arlincourt, and the decorous numbers of M. le Vicomte de Chateaubriand, in French, with Walter Scott and Miss Porter in English, were considered worthy of entry, and were listened to with complacency by Madame, and absolutely devoured by Lily.



After this, if the day were fine, came a walk. In her youth, perhaps, Madame had heard of the unholy kidnapping expeditions in the streets of Paris, by means of which, during the reign of the "well-beloved" and peculiarly abominable Louis the Fifteenth, the flesh and blood preserves of the Parc aux Cerfs were recruited. At any rate, Madame would never permit her protégée to go out alone. For seven years, confined by a painful and hopeless malady to her bed and her invalid chair, she had never left her third floor in the Marais; but she recognised the necessity for regular exercise in Lily's case. Sometimes Babette was deputed to accompany her in a two-hours' walk on the quays or in the Champs Elysées. Sometimes Vieux Sablons was commanded to escort her; but there were drawbacks to the advantages accruing from the protection of this faithful domestic. Vieux Sablons was a slave to the exigencies of style. Although with great difficulty he had been dissuaded from wearing, whenever he took his walks abroad, the silver-fringed cocked-hat which had been specially made for him when the emigrants returned in triumph with the allied troops in 1814, he insisted on carrying a portentous cane, with a gilt copper knob and two pendent acorns, and in tapping this staff on the ground from time to time as he walked, somewhat after the manner of the beadle at St. Germain des Prés during an ecclesiastical procession. The consequence was, that

the gamins, or little blackguard boys of Paris, who are assuredly not to be beaten for impudence and cruel acumen by the youths of any other capital in Europe, were accustomed to laugh at Vieux Sablons, to call him "Marquis de Carabas," "Micro-megas," "Voltigeur de Louis Quatorze," and the like, and to follow him, hooting and jeering, and occasionally casting mud and stones at him after the unhappily too frequent fashion of democratic and ill-trained juvenility. And these proceedings, naturally leading to "explications" between Vieux Sablons and the blackguard boys, in which the bamboo stick took somewhat too vivacious a part, a tumult was more than once the result, when Vieux Sablons had unpleasant altercations with the sergents de ville, not devoid of reference to a visit to the nearest post or guard house. Vieux Sablons experienced infinite pride and pleasure in escorting the "little m'amselle" as he called Lily—she was always to be little—but his style stood in his way, and the baroness would rarely suffer him to confront the perils of the little blackguards' satire.

At all events, Lily contrived to get a good bracing walk almost every fine day. At least twice a week Madame Prudence would look in to pay her respects to the baroness, and then it was she who would officiate as Lily's chaperone. Often, too, the Abbé Chatain would come, but ecclesiastical etiquette forbade that worthy man to be seen

in the street with a young lady. Once, when Babette and Lily were walking in the garden of the Luxembourg, they came upon the abbé, who was sitting on a bench reading his breviary. He rose in haste as they approached, and, blushing scarlet, walked away. He pettishly warned Babette, the next time he came to the Marais, against "compromising" him. Poor Abbé Chatain! He, too, was a slave to style.

Once, also, when Lily and Madame Prudence had ventured beyond the Triumphal Arch at the top of the Champs Elysées, and were wandering through the then ill-tended thickets of the Bois de Boulogne, they came upon the entire Pension Marcassin undergoing the dolorous relaxation of the "promenade." The girls were all rigidly watched by governesses and sub-governesses, and bad marks were plentifully distributed for such offences as not keeping step, or turning the head over the shoulder to gaze at a quack's platform, or a Punch's show; while, for a wonder, at the head of the procession marched the terrible Mademoiselle—the Marcassin herself.

She eyed her former pupil and victim narrowly, and with an evil countenance, as, trembling in every limb, and feeling herself turn white and red by turns, Lily passed. The Marcassin had got well rid of the unprofitable scholar; she had a hold upon her, in case her friends should ever

come forward; and yet she experienced a kind of cold rage at the thought that the girl had slipped through her fingers. It was so easy to punish the pupil who had no friends. It was so facile to torment the child who dared not complain. The Marcassin was vexed that, in a moment of weakness, she had permitted the abbé to take away the little English girl. Indeed, she was angry with the abbé altogether. He did not come so frequently as he used to come. He spent most of his leisure time in the Marais. He cared no more for tric-trac. He sounded the praises of the Baronne de Kergolay too often, and too warmly. As for Lily, he spoke of her goodness, her meekness, her docility, in a manner which, according to Mademoiselle Marcassin, was perfectly sickening. "Ce bonhomme d'abbé radote—he maunders," quoth the strong-minded schoolmistress. "I must seek out another director for the Pension Marcassin."

However, she knew that she had lost her prey, and was content to glower at the girl as she saw her, happy and prosperous, and with the glow of health upon her cheek. The governesses, taking the cue from the Marcassin, surveyed Lily and her companion with supercilious sneers, but their private comments failed to harmonise with the public recognition they had bestowed on the ex-pupil.

"She has been adopted by a duchess," one whispered.

"A duchess; bah! by a poverty-stricken old emigrant baroness out of the Vendée, rather. A pensioner on the ancient civil list, probably. My father was out in the Bocage. He was a Bleu. He knew all ces gens-là, and had four Kergolays shot in one day."

"It is no matter. La petite looks very well. She is not amiss, la petite."

"She was always an affectionate and obedient little thing, and it went to one's heart to have to punish her when she had committed no misdeeds, merely because such were the orders of superior authority."

"Well, she is out of the lion's den.—*Will* you walk straight, Tavernier l'Ainée, and refrain from using your fingers as castanets, or shall I report you, for the fifth time during the existing promenade, to Mademoiselle Espréménil, for ultimate reprimand and correction by Madame?"

The misdeeds of Mademoiselle Tavernier the elder, who was a very muscular young Christian indeed, and always scandalising the proprietors of the pensionnat by ill-repressed acrobatic feats, drove Lily out of the minds of the governesses, and half a minute after the scholastic cortége had passed by, she was forgotten by all save the Marcassin. But the Marcassin remembered her very well.

Madame Prudence had not beheld this little scene unmoved. She had, it will be remembered,

an old feud with the schoolmistress ; and, deliberately spitting on the ground, with certain solemn expressions of disparagement and defiance, she drew Lily's arm under hers, and walked on at a quick pace.

Lily did not fail to tell Madame de Kergolay, when they reached home, of her little adventure. The baroness deemed it her duty gently to chide the priest's housekeeper for her intemperance of language towards Mademoiselle Marcassin, but added the expression of a hope that she had not heard it.

"With a thousand reverences towards yourself, Madame la Baronne, and begging pardon for having spoken in the language of the people to which I belong, and against the canons of Christian charity which have been taught me by M. l'Abbé Chatain, I most sincerely wish that Mademoiselle Marcassin did hear what I said. Too long she tormented at her ease this dear innocent child ; and the stories which the abbé has told me of her cruelty and tyranny have made me, time after time, burn over with the desire of tearing her wicked old eyes out."

"That would be very wrong indeed, Madame Prudence"—it was the baroness who spoke. "We should forgive all our enemies, even as we hope to be forgiven."

"I humbly ask pardon," replied Madame Pru-

dence, with a low curtsey; "and I will pray for Mademoiselle Bluebeards this very night; but I should like to pass a little quarter of an hour with her, nevertheless."

"And, I am sure," interposed Lily, "that I forgive her. It was nothing, perhaps, but temper."

"It was nothing, perhaps, but *choux-fleurs à la sauce*," Madame Prudence said afterwards, in good-humoured banter (but not in the baroness's presence), to Lily. "My poor little angel heart, I tell you that woman was made of marble. Marble! Lava of a volcano, rather. Some years ago it may have been boiling and red-hot, and now it is turned into stone."

The dinner-hour on the third floor in the Marais was invariably six o'clock. The bill of fare was always simple; but the style, on which Vieux Sablons so prided himself, was never lacking. Twice a week the baroness fasted. She did not expect Lily to do the same, and even endeavoured to dissuade her from following her example; but the girl thought, in her simple heart, that it would be selfish not to abstain from meat, as her friends did upon meagre days; and besides she thought the sorrel soup, the fish, the vegetables, and omelettes which Babette served up on non-flesh days, very nice and succulent. On Sundays and feasts, they had generally some little extra delicacy—a

charlotte aux pommes, or a turkey stuffed with chesnuts.

After dinner came, on visiting evenings—that is to say, when Madame “received” on Tuesdays and Thursdays—a few very old gentlemen and a few very old ladies. They all seemed to have been shipwrecked, to have been knocked to pieces like the porcelain dessert services, and put together again. The Vidame de Barsac was seventy. He earned his living now as a teacher of English, a language he had acquired during the emigration. The Count de Panarion had been a mousquetaire gris. He was glad enough now, to do hack-work for a bookseller in the Rue St. Jacques. Monsieur de Fontanges had been a Knight of Malta. How he managed to earn a crust of bread now, was not precisely known. It was a delicate subject, and not much talked about. Madame Prudence, indeed, once hinted to Lily that the “poor dear man,” as she called him, had been compelled to accept a post in the orchestra of a theatre, and played second fiddle at the Odéon for a hundred francs a month.

The ladies were as antique and as dilapidated as the gentlemen. They were marchionesses, countesses, or plain mesdames, but all of noble birth; one, Mademoiselle de Casteaunac, was a sentimental old maid, who had been a beauty. They were all miserably poor, hiding their heads in cheap

boarding-houses, or cheaper garrets, or pining on the miserable pensions on the civil list, allocated by the government for the support of the decayed Bourbon aristocracy, and the sparse funds of which were supplemented every year by a grand ball at the Hôtel de Ville. The sentimental old maid had but one aspiration. She had an income amounting to the magnificent sum of twenty-five pounds a year. If she could only manage to raise it to forty (a thousand francs), they would receive her as a nun in one of the gloomiest and rigidest convents of the Faubourg St. Germain. It was not a bright prospect, but poor Sister Anne gazed at it wistfully from the tower of her spinsterhood. To be allowed to have your hair cut off, and to wear black serge and a veil; to be permitted to sleep on the boards, and scarify yourself with a horsehair vest, get up in the middle of the night to repeat the lamentations of Jeremiah, and subsist chiefly on stale bread and black radishes, and scourge yourself twice a week! Well, there are ambitions of various kinds, and Mademoiselle de Casteaunac's ambition extended no further than this. But she was deficient in her budget just fifteen pounds per annum, and her long-coveted bliss was unattainable. It is a practical age, indeed, when maceration costs money, and the treasurer of the vestal virgins expects a novice to come prepared with a compact sum in the Three per Cents.

These poor old people came and paid a feeble, fluttering court to Madame de Kergolay. She had lent—that is to say given—most of them money ; the name she bore was honoured and famous, and they accorded her a sincere and awful homage. Of all the victims of the dreadful revolution, none had suffered more deeply than the Baronne de Kergolay. She was almost a martyr. She had sat upon the steps of the scaffold. She had been in the tumbril. Her hair had fallen beneath Sanson's shears. Her husband, her father, her dearest friends and kinsmen, had been drowned in Robespierre's red sea. She said once, in sad playfulness, that she felt almost as though she had been decapitated, and her head had been sewn on again.

The entertainments in the Marais were not costly. Vieux Sablons, in connexion with the yellow wax candles in the silver sconces, provided all that was requisite in the way of style. For the rest, there was a little weak tea. The guests brought their own snuff, and what more could they want? They paid their little compliments, vented their meek complaints against the ungrateful government of the cadet branch, buzzed about their small scandals, and sometimes indulged in raillery, or drifted into dispute. Now and then a game at tric-trac or Boston was made up ; and at ten o'clock all took their leave, and the establishment on the third floor went to bed.

CHAPTER XII.

A SCAPEGRACE.

SAID Vieux Sablons to Lily Floris, one morning—it was in the sixth month of her residence in the Marais :

“ Little m’amselle, to-day there is ‘bombance.’ ”

“ I don’t quite understand you, Vieux Sablons. Bombance ! What is that ? ”

“ True, I am an animal. Madame would pull my ears for talking to you in so rude a manner. Madame always speaks classically, and expects her domestics to observe good style in their language. I mean, that to-day there is a festival, a holiday, a gala.”

“ And why, Vieux Sablons ? It is not a fête-day of your Church.”

“ Little puritan m’amselle ! What do you know

about our feasts or our fasts either? Though, for the matter of that, you insist upon making meagre whenever Madame does. But to-day is a secular holiday. The Scapegrace is coming."

"The Scapegrace! Who may he be?"

"Ah! you will find out soon enough. The scamp—the brigand—the ne'er-do-well—the good-for-nothing."

Lily turned hot and faint. Who was coming? She recalled the horrible story of Babette's husband. Was the convict expected?

"There!" exclaimed Vieux Sablons, good humouredly, as he observed the girl's agitation; "I am a brute, a buffalo, a rhinoceros, to terrify you so, little m'amselle. One would think I was announcing the advent of *Le petit homme Rouge*—the little Red Man who was wont to appear to Bonaparte. It is only M. Edgar Greyfaunt, Madame's graceless grand-nephew, who is coming."

"A-a-h!" murmured Lily; and it was a long-drawn "a-a-h."

"Don't be frightened. He will treat you as a child. Monsieur can only spare time for the grand dames of the Faubourg St. Germain. Monsieur even disdains to break the hearts of the grisettes in the Latin Quarter. Oh, Monsieur is very tenacious of his nobility."

"He is noble, then?"

"Is he not Madame's grand-nephew? Does

she not come of an ancient and illustrious stock? But he has none of the Kergolay blood in him. He has nothing to do with the old manor of Vieux Sablons; and, between you and me, little m'amselle, I don't think much of his nobility, for——"

"What, Vieux Sablons?"

The old man had come, suddenly, to a stop. He resumed, now, in some confusion: "What an imbecile I am! My tongue is always running away with me. I was going to say that I mistrusted his nobility because he is an Englishman. I cannot endure them, those sons of Albion. Why has he not a 'De' before his name? Monsieur Edgar Greyfaunt! That sounds neither more nor less than the name of a bourgeois. But I forgot, beast that I am, that Madame herself was of Britannic origin, and that everything belonging to her, even in the remotest degree, must be noble."

"And I, too, am English, Vieux Sablons," remarked Lily, sadly.

"But you are not noble," returned the old man, simply.

"I don't know. I am Quite Alone."

"It is not your fault, little m'amselle. An enfant trouvé may be the descendant of Henri Quatre. But we were speaking of M. Edgar. The prodigal grand-nephew has condescended to announce his intention of paying us a visit. It is six months

since Monsieur deigned to set his foot beneath our humble roof."

"Why does he stay away so long?"

"Why indeed. He professes to be very fond of his aunt. He can come often enough when he wants a billet of five hundred francs. But Monsieur has been away sketching, forsooth, and visiting the grand seigneurs and the grand dames at their châteaux. He despises the poor broken-down aristocracy of the Restoration. Nothing will suit him but the mushroom barons of Philippe, the newly-fledged peers of France, the marshals who, the day before yesterday, were drummer-boys. He visits the corps diplomatique. He is hand-in-glove with the Bourse. He is a favourite with bankers' wives. Oh, Monsieur is a man of fashion, the pet of Frascati's and the Café Anglais. Et tout ça n'est qu'un peintre. He is only a painter with a half-furnished atelier in the Rue Neuve des Augustins, and if it were not for the goodness of Madame, his grand-aunt, he would starve."

"Vieux Sablons," interposed Lily, gravely, "you are talking scandal. If Madame heard you, she would be very angry."

"Well, you are right, little m'amselle. I have no right to make observations; I, who am merely a poor valet de pied promoted to the chamber since our establishment has been reduced. Old Rococo, Monsieur the Prodigal calls me. Yes, I am old,

and broken, and rococo. I know nothing save to preserve the traditions of the grand style we used to keep at Vieux Sablons, and to love, and serve Madame; and, if I survive her, my only wish is to be buried in the same cemetery, and the same grave, at right angles, at her feet. The old nobility used to grant such privileges to their faithful servitors."

Lily was very sorry to see the old man moved: for two big tears were coursing down his parchment cheek. M. Edgar Greyfaunt was, evidently, no favourite of his. But his devotion to the lightest behests of his mistress got the better of his own personal feelings, and he resigned himself to the task of killing the fatted calf in anticipation of the arrival of the prodigal grand-nephew.

It was a very busy day. The invalid was agitated, as she always was when Edgar was expected. She was tetchy, almost cross, and Lily had to follow out the recipe of smiling upon her, and kissing her a great many times before sunset. The marketing done that morning was prodigious. Babette missed her out-door orisons. The famous turkey stuffed with chesnuts was prepared as a *pièce de résistance*. The dessert was on a sumptuous scale. Madame Prudence, by special permission of the Abbé Chatain, came to help; and, with the assistance of sundry little copper stewpans, and a red brick stove fed with charcoal, concocted entrées

of so overpowering and titillating an odour, that the subtlety of the aroma penetrated even to the boudoir of Madame de Kergolay, who, smilingly, speculated as to whether it was the compote of pigeons, or the salmi of partridges—of both of which Edgar was very fond—that Madame Prudence was cooking.

As for Vieux Sablons, he rubbed and polished the plate until it seemed in danger of disappearing utterly under the influence of excessive attrition. Lily was told that she was not to do anything, and was even scolded by Madame de Kergolay for offering to arrange the dessert; but she stole away in the course of the afternoon to deck the dining-room table with flowers, and display the napkins in symmetrical shapes, and fit little frills of cut paper to the candles.

Vieux Sablons whispered to her about five o'clock that there would be champagne at dinner, and also Chambertin.

"It is the grand vin, the famous vintage of 1827," he added. "Madame has only five bottles of it left. Only imagine! What extravagance! But she would dissolve diamonds in his Chambertin, if it were possible, and she had them."

M. Edgar Greyfaunt came to dinner, but he came late. It was twenty minutes past six before he condescended to ascend the staircase and pull the horse-hoof attached to the silken cord. But

had he come at twenty minutes past midnight he would have been welcome. It was not the slightest misfortune of Madame la Baronne de Kergolay that she literally idolised her graceless grand-nephew.

He was received in all ceremonious form, and with two lighted candles, by Vieux Sablons, triply powdered for the occasion.

"How are you, my ancient?" Lily heard him cry out, in a loud ringing voice, in the vestibule. "The same inimitable make-up. Vieux habits vieux galons! What a prodigious old mannequin it is. At the Italiens, mon cher, thou wouldst be invaluable as lacquey to Doctor Dulcamara."

He was speaking in French, confidently and fluently, but with a broad Saxon accent. He thee'd and thou'd Vieux Sablons, not affably, but superciliously, and whenever he called him "tu," or "toi," the old domestic, who was only accustomed to endure that familiarity from the lips of his mistress, bowed humbly, but visibly shuddered.

Monsieur Edgar Greyfaunt was ushered into the presence of his grand-aunt. He sank on one knee with a becoming grace enough, and pressed her hand to his lips. It was the homage of aristocrat to aristocrat. But when he rose, he tossed his head aloft and threw an insolent look around, as if to compensate for the act of humility he had just performed.

The compensation was almost gratuitous. There was no one in the room at whom to toss his head or look insolent, but a poor little English girl.

When his grand-aunt had folded him to her breast at least twenty times; when she had kissed his forehead, his cheeks, his eyes, his lips, over and over again; when she had smoothed his hair, and pressed his hands between her own white palms; when she had bidden him to stand away from her a little, that she might better regard him; when she had recalled him to fondle and caress him; when she had called him her darling Edgar, her hope, her pride, her sole comfort and stay in old age—she bethought herself that they, too, were not *Quite Alone*, and that there stood one present who was. She held out her kind hand to Lily, and pulling the trembling, blushing girl forward, proceeded to present her to M. Edgar.

"This is Miss Lily Floris," she said, in English, "a little English friend of mine. She is very good, and quiet, and useful, and I love her very dearly. You must be very kind to her, Edgar, and not at all sarcastic, for she is very young and timid."

Edgar made Lily a bow which was accompanied by a nod, and supplemented by a sneer. It seemed to say, "You are infinitely beneath me, my young friend, but since my aunt desires it, I will condescend to be civil to you." The girl shrunk, but, alas! not angrily, from his bold gaze. In the re-

motest corner of her heart the trembling little fingers of her soul were already beginning to set up an idol. As yet, what had she possessed to bow down to and worship? And how many of us are there who prostrate themselves every day to stocks and stones, and think them gods?

Edgar Greyfaunt was eminently handsome. They were all there : the trappings, and gewgaws, and flounces, and furbelows of man's comeliness that drive silly women out of their wits. He was tall and shapely, and his nose was aquiline, and his teeth were white. His hands and feet were small, and his auburn hair curled in rich luxuriance over his broad white forehead. Nature had provided him with every luxury. All the accessories and addenda of beauty he possessed. None of the trifling adjuncts, the absence of which the cunning eye of a woman quickly detects, were absent. The slight moustache he wore became him infinitely. There was a touch of softness in his smile to relieve its impudence. There were silken eyelashes to veil his bold glance. There was a dash of music in his loud clear voice. There was strength as well as elegance in his limbs. Women like a Narcissus grafted on the Colossus of Rhodes. The middlingly handsome man has no chance with them. To succeed, you must be either a model of manly and athletic beauty, or else as ugly as Jack Wilkes or Gabriel de Mirabeau, and with the serpent or the

devil's tongue. And sometimes squinting Wilkes and pock-pitted Mirabeau are more successful than Adonis the Life Guardsman and Antinous the muscular heathen.

They went in to dinner, and the prodigal grand-nephew was feasted. Lily kept her eyes consistently on her plate from the potage to the dessert, yet for all that she was perfectly well aware that his highness the grand-nephew's gaze was seldom away from her face. Madame de Kergolay ascribed her blushings and tremblings, her droppings of knives and forks and napkins, to timidity. To what other cause, indeed, could they be ascribed?

It is needless to give an accurate report of the table-talk. Madame de Kergolay uttered little beyond interjections of admiration and affection. Lily said nothing at all. As for Edgar Greyfaunt, he simply bragged; and a handsome braggadocio has little to fear when his only two possible interlocutors are a fond doting old woman and a shrinking girl. He bragged about everything in general, and himself in particular. About the praise M. Delaroche, whose pupil he was, had bestowed upon his study in oil from Michael Angelo, and the chance he had of carrying off the Grand Prize of Rome at the approaching competition at the School of Fine Arts. About his jokes in the studio, and his fencing matches with his fellow-students, whom he always vanquished. About a young painter scarcely so old

as he, who had just got the cross of the Legion of Honor. "Everybody admits that I am superior to him in form, in composition, and in colour," quoth Edgar, modestly; "but then, you see, I am such a fainéant, such a lazy fellow. Never mind, I shall catch up young Rapinard in a year or two."

Madame de Kergolay fondly believed that he would, and, in her secret soul, marvelled whatever those tasteless idiots, the Jury of the Exposition of Paintings, could have been about, to recommend Rapinard for the cross. It is true that Prince Greyfaunt had never exhibited anything. He told his great-aunt, with his easy laugh, that Rapinard was the son of an employé in the Pompes Funèbres—an undertaker's man; that his mother kept a bureau de nourrices—a servants' registry office; that he had a head like Quasimodo in Notre-Dame de Paris, and one leg shorter than the other. Madame de Kergolay was only acquainted with one Quasimodo—the duly calendared saint of that name; but, good, charitable, Christian woman as she was, she could scarcely help despising the bourgeois Rapinard, the son of the croquemort. She did not know that Rapinard rose at six every morning, to draw from the round till nine; that he painted all day; that he sat up half the night poring over his Albinus, and drawing the bones of the skeleton, and the upper and lower layers of muscles backwards. And, had she known that

Rapinard lived chiefly on red eggs and sous'-worths of Brie cheese; that he kept his father the under-taker, who was blind, and his mother the registry-shop keeper, who was paralytic; and that he was accustomed to say, "Never mind; we shall be better off when I am a member of the Institute and an officer of the Legion" (and Rapinard, I rejoice to say, is both, at this present writing); had Madame la Baronne been reminded of these trifling things, her opinion concerning Rapinard would have changed, I warrant, to a surprising degree.

But there was no end to the Sultan Greyfaunt's bragging. He condescended to bestow a long evening on his aged relative, and, when he was tired of bragging about art, he gave fashion a turn. With vainglorious loquacity, he dwelt upon the grand houses to which he had been invited during his sketching tour; "for, although," he remarked, apologetically, "I mean to be a historical painter, one mustn't lose sight of the value of landscapes in backgrounds." His talk was of dukes and counts, of presidents of the chamber, and keepers of the seals. When his grand-aunt asked after the bearer of some memorable name, some waif and stray of the great revolutionary shipwreck, he laughed.

"Ask me after the Doge of Venice. All these people are as rococo as Vieux Sablons yonder, and are sensibly hidden away in the Marais like rats in a hole. Now and then, I cross the river to the Rue

de Lille or de Bourgogne, and look up the respectable antiquities left high and dry by the receding tide. Do you know, my aunt, there are still people who believe in the most Christian King Charles the Tenth, and speak of that little boy over yonder as Henry the Fifth?"

"And you, my nephew," the old lady, in mild expostulation, interposed: "do you forget that I too have touched the hand of the sainted Charles, and that my only king is Henry?"

"There was a king in Thule—history of five hundred years ago—history of the Deluge," returned Edgar, coolly. "I might just as well revive the claims of the Lancashire Greyfaunts to half a dozen dormant peerages. I dare say we are entitled to them," he added, with a proud look.

Then he went on to say that one must live with the moderns, and take the world as it came. "A banker's daughter, with a dowry of two millions, and a pedigree out of the Rue des Mauvaises Paroles; or Mademoiselle the Marquis's eldest, with nothing but her virtue (and that of the most acidulated character), and a genealogical tree as wide-spreading as a banyan. No, no, give me Miss Banker and her fat money-bags."

Warmed by the Chambertin, he began to speak of the Jockey Club, to which he intended to obtain admittance some day; of steeple-chases and billiard-matches; of the cafés and the Bois de Boulogne;

of the duels he had fought, and the bets he had made (and won, of course) ; of the actresses——”

But, when he came to the dramatic chapter of his adventures, Madame de Kergolay discreetly whispered to Lily, and she and Vieux Sablons wheeled the invalid's chair, not, as was customary, into the boudoir bed-chamber, but into the salon—the which, in honour of the grand-nephew's visit, was lighted up with no less than six wax candles. This was not one of Madame's reception nights. She only expected the Abbé Chatain, and found him waiting for her.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BLANK HEART OF THE SCAPEGRACE.

EDGAR was left to enjoy the remainder of his Chambertin alone. He did ample justice to it, and was further privileged to smoke his cigar—a favour not extended to any other male visitor. It was, perhaps, as well, for the sake of peace and quiet, that the baroness did not “receive” when Edgar favoured the establishment with his presence. To tell the truth, he rather alarmed the feeble old ladies and gentlemen who composed his grand-aunt’s social circle. He was a little too boisterous, and a little too insolent; and the old ladies and gentlemen, who were high-spirited, albeit feeble, declined, sometimes with considerable warmth, to bow to his dictation. But to his aunt he must always be Lord Paramount.

She invariably deferred to him. He could never be in the wrong. Was he not her grand-nephew, the only being upon earth left to remind her of her English kindred?

The outbreak of the great French revolution had found Madame de Kergolay young, beautiful, and the wife of a nobleman of ancient descent and great wealth, distinguished in arms, and high in his sovereign's favour. In the haughty province of Brittany there was no estate better tended, and no château more stately than belonged to the Kergolays of Vieux Sablons. The baroness bore her husband two daughters. The revolution came sweeping down like a crimson deluge on society, and all was engulfed beneath its waves. M. de Kergolay emigrated, leaving his wife and infant children concealed in a convent in Paris. The manor-house of Vieux Sablons was sacked by the revolutionary troops, taken by a band of Chouan peasants, besieged, captured, its defenders slaughtered, itself at last gutted, fired, and demolished from basement to coping-stone. The convent in which Madame de Kergolay and her daughters had taken refuge was suppressed by the Convention, and the nuns were driven forth with blows and insults, some to perish of starvation, many to die on the Place de la Révolution. The Baron de Kergolay left the emigrant camp of Condé in disguise, and

sought his wife in Paris. He was discovered, flung into the Conciergerie, and guillotined. Her husband's brothers, and scores of her relatives and friends, had already undergone the same fate. Her widowhood was yet green upon her, when she, too, was arrested and cast into the Abbaye. There, after a short time, both her children died of malignant fever. The smell of so much blood, the poor woman said, choked them. When Fouquier Tinville denounced the femme Kergolay before the revolutionary tribunal, she was half frantic, and a far fitter subject for a cell at Bicêtre than for the judgment of a criminal court. But she was condemned to death nevertheless. The revolutionary tribunal did not stick at trifles. All was fish that came to the net of terrorism. The Baronne de Kergolay was arrayed in the fatal camisole, and was mounting the cart which was to convey her to the scaffold, when the fall of Robespierre obtained for her a temporary reprieve, ultimately enlarged into a pardon. But she was not the less a proscribed and ruined *ci-devant*. She herself used to describe how she had begged for alms on the Quai des Orfèvres. After a period of unutterable privation and destitution, a friend found her out and stealthily helped her. That friend was her former footman from Vieux Sablons, Thomas Prudence. He had prospered, and grown wealthy even. The

shipwreck had cast him, too, on the waves, but he had been strong and buoyant, and battled with them, and, clinging to spars and hencoops, had been saved: A portion of the sequestered manor of Vieux Sablons was bestowed upon him by the Convention. He was looked upon with horror by the loyalist peasants as an acquirer of the national domains. Half a dozen attempts were made to assassinate him. He took army contracts, and waxed rich, and was hated by the Chouannerie. His house was decorated with fragments of the rich furniture and fittings of the château of Vieux Sablons. He was a staunch republican. He contrived, however, to furnish his old mistress with funds enabling her to reach England, and during her lengthened residence there, from 1796 to the fall of Napoleon, nearly twenty years, he conveyed to her no less a sum than ten thousand pounds sterling. It was but a mere trifle, he said—a wreck, a windfall—but it was all hers. Nay, he took advantage of the peace of Amiens to freight a sloop at Nantes with articles he had saved from the dismantled château, and send them to her whom he still called his *châtelaine* and benefactress.

Madame de Kergolay went down into Lancashire and abode for a long time at Preston, much beloved and respected by the old Catholic families in those parts. But the race to which she herself

belonged, the Greyfaunts, she found decayed and almost extinct. One nephew, a country gentleman with estates mortgaged to their last rood, she discovered. The son of that nephew was Edgar Greyfaunt, who was born just before Waterloo.

When all was over with Napoleon, the Baronne de Kergolay, who had been living on the interest of the money sent her by Thomas Prudence, and who had even managed to put by some twenty hundred pounds of savings from her income, returned to France. It was not long before she heard of Thomas. The collapse of the Empire, which had restored her to society, had ruined him. On the profits of his army contracts he had started a cotton manufactory. He might have become a second Richard Lenoir, but peace came, and Manchester, all prohibitive and protective enactments notwithstanding, poked its nose of smoking brick into France, and Thomas Prudence was ruined. Madame de Kergolay hastened to the succour of the man who had saved her from starvation. But Thomas was old, and wanted little. "I am sick of commerce," he said. "My failure is a punishment for having taken contracts under the usurper. Diantre! how the rouleaux used to roll in, though. But that is all over now. I am growing old and foolish. Let me come back to you, Madame la Baronne, and be your footman. Promote me to be your butler if you like. I have my old livery still

by me, and I will serve you as faithfully as I did in the days when you were the Châtelaine of Vieux Sablons."

"You shall be my friend and adviser in the evening of my days," cried Madame de Kergolay, clasping the old man's hand.

And so, indeed, Thomas Prudence, otherwise Vieux Sablons, was; but he would never consent to divest himself of his livery, or to consider himself as anything but an attached and favoured menial of the great house of Vieux Sablons.

In this light—the menial light—without the attachment or the favour, the octogenarian was regarded by the superb young gentleman now sipping his Chambertin, and smoking his cigar. This high and mighty prince, precisely as he thought it the most natural thing in the world that his grand-aunt should spoil and idolise himself, deemed it a matter of course that Vieux Sablons should be his very obedient, humble, obsequious, and contemned servant. A hundred times he had heard from his grand-aunt the story of the old man's devotion and self-sacrifice. He thought that a very natural thing, too. He knew perfectly well that every sou the baroness possessed had been given to her by the worn-out lacquey; but he treated him with calm and disdainful insolence. "Well," he would sometimes acknowledge, when remonstrated with by his grand-aunt for some

unusual act of contumeliousness towards the ancient servitor, "perhaps he had at one time rendered some sort of service to the family. But it was ever so long ago. Besides, it was his duty; and the romantic kind of gratitude was only possible in virtuous dramas at the Gymnase." I wonder what would become of the world if acts of duty such as Thomas Prudence had performed were only possible in virtuous dramas at a play-house!

One most salient characteristic of Edgar Greyfaunt would be overlooked, if it were omitted to mention that he entertained a profound contempt for the people among whom he was domiciled. He went into French society, and of the best, because his relationship to Madame de Kergolay opened to him dozens of doors in France, while his English appellation would have been quite powerless in like regard, in the country of his birth. He spoke French fluently, because he had been brought up at the Collège Louis-le-Grand; but no protectionist farmer had ever a livelier dislike, and heartier contempt, for the French than Mr. Edgar Greyfaunt. He held the Greyfaunts of Lancashire to be infinitely superior in point of extraction, status, and polish, not only to the Kergolays, but to all the Rohans, Noailles, Condés, or Montmorencys in the Libro d'Oro of France. As, however, it was only the allowance his grand-

aunt made him that kept him from starving, he resigned himself to his lot, and contented himself with abusing and sneering at the people in whose midst he lived. "I have a turn for drawing and painting," he would remark to such English exquisites, as he, from time to time, met in Paris; "and so, as a gentleman must do something in a country where there are no field sports worth having, and the Church is impossible, and Literature is snuffy and vulgar, and the Bar low, I moved the old lady to place me with Delaroche, who lets me do what I like, and makes much of me. In France, you know, it is the custom for artists to go into society. David, the scoundrel, was a baron, and so was Gros; and they give Us a plentiful share of crosses and red ribbons. A fellow doesn't mind going in for art if he's looked up to, and is decorated, and goes to court, and all that kind of thing. But it wouldn't do in England, you know. I should be obliged to go into the army, or something of that sort, and keep the paint-pot dark." After which profound exposition of the proprieties, Prince Greyfaunt's exquisite friends would opine that he had acted very sensibly, and that so long as he remained in that confounded hole, meaning Paris, it was just as well to spoil canvas as to do nothing at all. But he must never forget, they told him, what he owed to society, and when the old lady (meaning his grand-

aunt) died, and cut up well, he would return to his native country, live as a gentleman should, and keep the paint-pots very dark indeed.

Prince Edgar had come to the end of his second cigar, and of the Chambertin too; he had taken his coffee, his petit verre, and his chasse. It was nearly ten o'clock. On his condescending visits the vigils of the Marais were prolonged until eleven, and it now occurred to him that he might join the ladies. "There will be that stupid old abbé, prosing away as usual," he remarked with a yawn, "but I suppose I must endure him." Presently a bitter smile came over him at the thought that he had spoken of Lily as one of the "ladies." Who was the little thing? He would ask Vieux Sablons.

"A protégée of Madame la Baronne," replied the servitor, with a low bow.

"Charity, I suppose?" continued the young man.

"The usual charity and benevolence of Madame la Baronne," replied Thomas, laying respectful emphasis on the words.

"Ah! my good aunt does not consider that her charity has a tendency to eat her natural heirs out of house and home. Upon my word, her house is a receptacle for the lame, the halt, and the blind. I do believe that half the people who come here are no better than a pack of old paupers. My

aunt made him that kept him from starved, resigned himself to his lot, and contented with abusing and sneering at the people amidst he lived. "I have a turn for drawing and painting," he would remark to such English sites, as he, from time to time, met in "and so, as a gentleman must do something in the country where there are no field sports, and the Church is impossible, and the atmosphere is snuffy and vulgar, and the Baroness moved the old lady to place me with David, who lets me do what I like, and makes me comfortable. In France, you know, it is the custom for artists to go into society. David, the sculptor, was a baron, and so was Gros; and they get a plentiful share of crosses and red ribbons. David doesn't mind going in for art if he's looked after, and is decorated, and goes to court, and does a kind of thing. But it wouldn't do in England, you know. I should be obliged to go to the army, or something of that sort, and my paint-pot dark." After which profound reflection of the proprieties, Prince Greyfaunt's friends would opine that he had acted sensibly, and that so long as he remained in the founded hole, meaning Paris, it was just as well to spoil canvas as to do nothing at all. He never forgot, they told him, what he had learned in society, and when the old lady (mean-

servant, as he clattered to and fro with the paraphernalia of the table, putting everything in its place in cupboard and pantry, "you are a gentil-homme; and the grand-nephew of my beloved mistress; and clever, and handsome, and very fashionable; but, upon my word, I think you have no more heart than this empty bottle."

He was holding the flask of Chambertin in his hand. There was just a drain of the rare old wine left, and he poured it into a glass and drank it off, and smacked his thin old lips. Although but dregs the dram was generous, and gave him courage for a bolder thought.

"And, upon my word, Monsieur Edgar Greyfaunt," he concluded, "my private opinion is, that you are a very finished scoundrel, and will come to a bad end."

A little after eleven o'clock, the Prince lighted a cigar, and went down to the Café Anglais.

"How much money has he asked you for?" said the abbé, as the door closed behind Edgar.

"Five thousand francs," replied the baroness, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "Poor dear fellow, he says he will be ruined if I cannot raise that sum by Tuesday next. Dear abbé, you must go to-morrow to my notary."

"And you have but ten thousand francs a year. Madame la Baronne, this misguided youth will be the ruin of you."

The Abbé Chatain was pacing the room with long soft strides, but a most melancholy visage.

"Let *him* be ruined," he resumed, halting. "Better that he should suffer than you, than your widows and orphans, than your beggars and penitents. Let him suffer. It may do him good."

Lily did not hear this lugubrious conversation. She was in bed. By the time the abbé had departed, she was asleep, dreaming of Edgar Greyfaunt.

CHAPTER XIV.

POOR LITTLE LILY.

WOE for the little woman!—for she was a woman, now. She woke up the next morning, and she loved the Scapegrace.

Had any one come to her, and said, “Lily, you are in love,” she would, with pretty earnestness, have repudiated the charge. She would have pleaded that she knew nothing about love; that she had read but few love-tales, and heard but few persons talk about love; that she had been Quite Alone all her life, and, in default (until very recently) of there being any one to love her, was ignorant of the precise manner in which affection, although directed towards another object, should be repudiated.

Woe for the little woman! She loved the Scapegrace nevertheless.

Love came to her as no smirking Cupid with purple wings to fetter her with shackles made from wreaths of roses. Love was no powdered shepherd, as in the tapestries in the baroness's chamber, with flowers in his wig, and ribbons to his crook. Love came silently, and sat over against her little bed, and said, "I am here ; and, henceforth, you must be my slave and bond-servant."

She was too weak to battle with him. She was too candid to deny him. She was too good to tell a lie to herself, and call love liking. She acknowledged him, bowed down before him, and gave herself up to him, a submissive truthful captive.

It seemed to be a love to which there had been no beginning, and to which there could be no end. Marriage—the thought never entered her head. Passion—she knew not what passion was. To be beloved again—she never nurtured a hope that he whom she loved would ever return her love, or even know of it. It was more the sublime side of the love of a child for her doll ; and, from the sublime to the ridiculous, there was, as usual, but one step. To lavish boundless affection on an object which was, to her, inanimate and unconscious ; to pour terms of affection into deaf ears, to mirror herself in blind eyes, to gloat over breathless lips, to cherish an image which, without, is only paint, and varnish, and scraps of ribbon ; and within,

only rags and sawdust—this is what the child does with her doll; and this is what Lily Floris did with the idol of Edgar Greyfaunt which she had built up in the corner of her soul. A spruce Fetish, forsooth. A golden calf, or one shining at least with the bravest Dutch metal. A curled and oiled Mumbo-Jumbo; but she worshipped it in secret, and with a devouring adoration. Had she, in her dreary childhood, been given more dolls to play with, she might not, perhaps, have been so ready to fall in love with the stalwart waxen puppet that was called Edgar Greyfaunt.

Do you reproach her for falling in love at first sight? Silly girls, at her age, and loving as she did, usually do so. The prudent virgins are vaccinated, and take the disorder slowly, and in the mildest form; albeit, on them, often, in middle life, the disease falls again with appalling virulence, and kills them. The foolish virgins catch the infection at once, and have it hot and strong; and happy are those who get over it, and rise again, cured, but scarred for life.

Besides, is there any love at first sight? One doubts it. Is not the first fortuitous rencounter with the object that is to be beloved, merely the realisation of an ideal that has been nourished in the heart for years? It seemed to Lily as though she had always been thinking of Edgar Greyfaunt ever since she was a child, and now he had come.

She had always loved, and would always continue to love him.

Had there been two parties to this amorous action, a third might have interposed in the suit. An interpleader might have arisen, in the shape of jealousy. Lily would have dreamt of a rival, feared her, hated her perhaps; for as it is in the power of Love to mollify and sweeten all evil thoughts, so is it unhappily within its attributes to turn all that is good into poison and venom. But Lily was plaintiff, defendant, counsel, attorney, judge, jury, usher, and auditory all in one. She stated her own case, and replied to herself. She summed up herself, and herself gave the verdict, and herself delivered the verdict. It was always to the same effect: that she loved Edgar Greyfaunt.

But he, handsome, gifted, courted—did he love, was he beloved by, another? Well; Lily thought upon this sometimes, and trembled, and her heart swooned within her. But she was not always possessed by the thought. Love is so far merciful, as not perpetually to insist on the unknown eventuality. If the young who love in secret suffered this torture of fear without intermission, they would go out and drown themselves. If a man of threescore years and ten, who knows his end to be imminent, were always dwelling upon death, he would never be able to eat his dinner. Oblivion for the mind

is as necessary as rest for the body, and is as beneficently meted out to us. Labour and thought, without surcease, would be intolerable.

The spiteful magician Love has the art of making all things appear as they are not; and has been revelling in that trick ever since he made the Fairy Queen enamoured of the weaver clown that had the jackass's head instead of his own clod pate. For thousands of years before that, maybe, he worked the same rascally spell. Love can transfer, transfuse, transmute, conjure dry leaves into guineas, dress up the daw in peacock's feathers, give the wolf sheep's clothing; turn Christopher Sly into a duke, the princess into a goose-girl, the pumpkin into a coach and six, and the Beast into Prince Azor; quite as often, believe me, the Beast is a Beast to the end of the chapter, only Beauty is stricken by Love with colour-blindness, and mistakes rusty black for brightest crimson. To Lily, Edgar Greyfaunt was at once (but it was all conjuring) invested with the most lovable attributes of the kind gentleman at Greenwich who had sat by her side at the dinner, and kissed her when she went away. Straightway she passed, in an arbitrary little parliament, an act for transferring stock; and under this act all the love standing in the Million per Cents. in the name of William Long was handed over to Edgar Greyfaunt. Then she piled Pelion upon Ossa; she buttered the fat

pig; she gilded the refined gold; she smothered her idol with roses. She gave him all the love she felt for the schoolmates who had been kind to her; for the Bunnycastle; for the good-hearted folks at Cutwig and Co.'s; for the very courier on board the steamer who had treated her with "joggolate." And lastly, she bestowed upon the vacuous inane Fetish (ah! but he was so beautiful!) all the immeasurable love she should have felt for the parents who had neglected and abandoned her. Was there none left for Madame de Kergolay, for kindly Madame Prudence, for the homely Babette, for the cheery Vieux Sablons, for the good priest? Well! there was gratitude, veneration; but, what would you have? When the Houses of Parliament are all ablaze, who thinks of the chimney that has caught fire in a second floor back in the Horse-ferry-road?

So much overwhelming overpowering love did she give the handsome Fetish, that he might have staggered, and sunk under the weight. He happened, however, to know nothing about it; and had he known all about it, the handsome brute would not have understood it.


But the fires of her love were well banked up. The furious little furnace consumed its own smoke. It found no vent in sighs and moans, in confidences with women, in tender glances, in passionate letters, in sickly poetry (the which safety-valve has

saved many estimable lads and lasses from the commission of suicide; the chief advantages being that, once in love, any idiot can write poetry, and when one has written a hundred and thirty stanzas, and duly corrected them, they can always be torn up and crammed into the fire). Lily had no one to speak to, and no one to write to, about her love. A dim pervading consciousness came sometimes over her, warning her that if anybody about the place—the housekeeper, the old lacquey, the priest, the baroness—knew aught of her secret, the knowledge would be equivalent to her condemnation to death. And so, nothing short of the rack and the thumbscrew, or the delirium of brain fever, would have made her confess that terrible word of fatefulness.

What could the poor child do, then? Let concealment, like a worm in the bud, prey on her damask cheek? Not at all. Her love coveted and courted concealment. It had been engendered of a sudden, like a mushroom, and grew best in a cellar. It was a modest, and a timid and silent love. It would have died for very shame, had it been dragged into the open air. Its sequestration preyed by no means on Lily's cheek. It made her happy. It was company to her. Good and generous as the simple folks were among whom she had been mercifully thrown, Lily could but feel that they were strangers to her. But

now she had this love, and she was no longer *Quite Alone*.

The love must have some vent, however, or her heart-strings would have cracked. There was an old harpsichord in the salon, playing on which she had often lulled Madame de Kergolay to sleep. She was no brilliant performer, for her music-lessons had been few and far between, and her practice had been furtively snatched from the menial occupations, and the hours of confinement and punishment, at the Pension Marcassin. But Lily had a quick ear, an adroit finger, and a pretty taste. There was a pile of old pigtail music on a cabinet by the harpsichord—madrigals and canzonets, ballads and complaintes—from “Vive Henri Quatre” to “La Belle Gabrielle,” from “*Charmante bergère, m’aimeras-tu ?*” to “*J’ai vu Dorinde ; elle me sourit.*” Lily had learned to play these fusty charming productions—to know, even, something of Gluck, and Rameau, and Grétry. And sometimes even she ventured to sing in a low tender voice some ballad, English or French, that Madame de Kergolay loved. She found herself now, drifting from the decorous stream of graven music into a turbid ocean of voluntaries and capriccios. It was her love. Love was streaming from her heart, and down her rounded arms, and from her fingers on to the ebony and ivory of the keys. The baroness told



her that she was fast becoming a brilliant player. The baroness sighed that she could not afford to buy her a pianoforte. She declared that she would hire one. The Abbé Chatain suggested a seraphine. None of them knew that it was Love who was the music-master.

And then, in the privacy of her little chamber she would strive to draw and delineate the features of the beautiful Fetish. Her fingers were unused to the pencil, and she gave up the attempt disconsolately. But in a bunch of flowers she could see his likeness; his face came forth among the crackling embers on the hearth; his profile undulated in the pattern of the wall-paper; it curled in the smoke from the house-tops. It was wreathed in the fleeciness of the summer clouds.

Once or twice, in the Luxembourg Gardens, she detected herself tracing the letter E with her parasol in the powdery gravel. But Prudence being with her she hastened to efface the letter and make diagrams of monstrous creatures with impossible noses and preternatural cocked-hats. Yet it seemed as if the letter E could never be rubbed out. Do all she could, it was indelible as the blood at Holyrood.

At home she was less cautious. Poetry, indeed, she eschewed, and, as has been said, she had no one to write to about him. But she found herself scribbling his name one day all over a blotting-pad. It

was "Edgar Greyfaunt," "Monsieur Edgar Greyfaunt," "Captain Greyfaunt," "Le Chevalier Edgar de Greyfaunt," "Monsieur le Baron de Greyfaunt-Kergolay." Then she stopped; but why not

- have gone on to prince, or king, or kaiser? Had Edgar seen the blotting-pad, his enormous vanity would have had stomach for them all.

This is the way in which girls go on. Poor Lily indeed.

CHAPTER XV.

AT THE CORNER OF THE RUE DE RICHELIEU.

It is a tall and stately house of many stories. Perhaps, by this time, they have pulled it down, and built up another palace more sumptuous on its site ; but a quarter of a century since, it was lofty, and commanding, and imposing.

It had been a café, a restaurant, and a concert-room. Waxwork was shown there once, I fancy. It had been a toy-shop, and a shawl-shop, and an advertising tailor's. Once a court jeweller had it, and once a fashionable milliner. But it always bore its peculiar stamp of stateliness, and, at the worst of times, held on to its dignity bravely. It was always FRASCATI'S.

In the time when this history ran its course, this place was in the last throes of its splendid shame-

ful existence as a gambling-house. The Maisons de Jeu, the scandal of France and in Europe, were moribund. The concession of a privilege for the holding the public gaming-tables was in the hands of the municipality of the city, who derived a large annual revenue from the infamous concerns : a revenue which was, however, but a beggar's dole compared with the enormous profits of the Fermiers des Jeux, or lessees of the tables. To the credit of the *Ædiles* of Paris, all the dirty money they gathered off the green baize of Frascati's and similar haunts of madness and avarice, was applied to charitable purposes ; but the government had grown tired and ashamed of this nefarious method of contributing to the poor rate, and had warned the municipality that the concession they granted soon after eighteen hundred and thirty must be the last. The banker (or gaming-table keeper), Benazet, had timely notice to remove his croupiers and macers, his rakes and pricked cards, and was destined, with other birds of prey, to take flight to Baden, and other congenial hells of Fatherland, and settle there to the perpetuation of plunder. But France was freed, at last, from these vultures.

The life thus remaining to Frascati's (for the Palais Royal tripots were shut up) was a short one, but its patrons and fomenters determined that it should be merry. To the accustomed frequenters of the establishment, suppers on an unheard-of

scale of luxury were given every night in the cabinets adjoining the great gambling-rooms. Within a month of the dissolution of the gigantic swindle, the cornices were regilt, fresh chandeliers hung, and the windows veiled with fresh green velvet draperies. The affluence of strangers was tremendous. There never was known such a crowd of players, from eleven o'clock in the forenoon till eleven o'clock in the evening; for these dens were open by day as well as by night. The saloons were crowded with dandies, lawyers, politicians, journalists, artists, and foreigners of distinction, mingled with the common and unmistakable herd of shabby wan-faced fishy-eyed professional gamblers. People had to stake over each other's shoulders. Thousand-franc notes fluttered through the air, as hoarse voices directed their destination towards red or black, odd or even, under or over, number or colour, square or transversal column, or zero. The croupiers looked contemptuously upon the starveling wretches who played silver. It was as much as ever room could be made for the desperate throwsters who played rouleaux of golden louis. From chime to chime, right round the clock, were the chinking of the money, the sharp pattering of the cards as they fell from the banker's hands, the whirring of the roulette-wheel, the click of the ball, the rasping of the croupes as the forfeited stakes were gathered

in, and the dull hoarse voices of the masters of the game crying out that red had won, or that thirty-five had turned up, black, even, and over—anon enjoining the gentlemen present to make their game, then telling them the game was made, and that no further stake could be received. A hundred times within an hour the lugubrious monotonous chant was audible. One seemed to be listening to the out-door litany of the Trappist: “Frère, il faut mourir.”

Otherwise, there prevailed a deathly silence. Never was there so well-behaved a place as this superterranean pandemonium. It was accounted a flagrant breach of etiquette to make a noise under any circumstances—to rejoice loudly if you won, to lament audibly if you lost, to quarrel about a questionable throw, or even to converse in aught exceeding a discreet under tone. When you entered, a grave doorkeeper took from you your hat and stick, partly, it may be assumed, to ensure the preservation of good manners in so very aristocratic a saloon, partly to obviate the possibility of any votary of the blind goddess (who sees much better athwart her bandage than we give her credit for), rendered desperate by a continuous run of ill-luck, flinging his hat violently at the dealer (as a speaker of the Irish House of Commons is said to have once flung his wig at the head of an orator who wouldn't leave off), or running a crou-

pier through with a sword-cane. If acquaintances wished to chat, or to argue, they went into an ante-chamber, or into the supper-room. The solemn and powdered lacqueys who stole about with cards and pins for calculating punters (who, knowing every probability of the game save one, and, failing the knowledge of that, were beggared), appeared to glide in list slippers. The whole place wore a calm and peaceful aspect, most beautiful to the philosopher. There was no wailing, no gnashing of teeth, no tearing of hair, no stamping of feet. When human wickedness is concentrated on one particular object, and all its faculties remorselessly perverted and bent, with diabolical strength of volition, towards the attainment of one particular end, human wickedness is apt to be very quiet indeed. Guy Fawkes did not whistle at his work, you may be sure. The administration of strychnine is not a comic song.

It occurred one morning during this ultimate gala time—this “Vauxhall closing for ever” season of Frascati’s—to two gentlemen, both known by name and character to the readers of this chronicle (although of one its sight and cognisance have been lost for a considerable period), to look in at the corner of the Rue de Richelieu and try their luck upon the red and the black.

One was a very old friend, and he had grown to be a very old man. It is nearly twelve years

since we last met him. His hair was still black, but it was the hair of a wig, and not of a living head. His whiskers were ragged and sparse, and these, together with a bristly moustache he had recently grown, were ill dyed, and the white showed athwart the purple, like cotton in a fraudulent fabric of silk. His teeth, which were wont to gleam so beautifully, were now only a few irregular broken and discoloured fangs. His face was haggard, yet unduly puffed and swollen about the jaws, and in many places blotched with purple. It was easy to detect, without turning down his eyelid or inhaling his breath, that he drank. He snuffed, too, in every place where he was not allowed to smoke. He had come to that age when a naughty old man wants every kind of stimulant, and rushes down-hill by half a dozen parallel roads. His attire was shabby and his linen cloudy; his trousers were patched, and the lustre on his hat was due, half to grease and half to the recent application of a wet brush. You could see the hole in his left boot, where he had inked his stocking to conceal the whiteness of the orifice. In one hand he dangled a dingy yellow glove, which had no fellow; from his dexter wrist dangled by a string a loaded walking-stick, which was more like a bludgeon. But it would be unpardonable to omit the fact that he wore spurs dimly lacquered, and that his frayed and eraceous stock was fastened

with a sham carbuncle pin, price one franc twenty-five centimes in the Galerie Vivienne, and unavailable at the Mont de Piété.

This was all that was left of the fashionable Mr. Francis Blunt. The glories of the Horticultural fête, Gamridge's Hotel, the cabriolet and the tiger, the body-servant and the chambers in town, the watches, the rings, the scent and cambric, and the cut velvet waistcoats, had all come down to this. It would be wearisome to dwell on all the details of a career towards the dogs, which had continued with brief intermissions of prosperity for twelve years. It would be sullyng this page with the shabbiest and sorriest of chronicles. His instincts had always been canine, and the dogs had him at last. It was a natural culmination. It was only what might have been expected. Hundreds of spirits as dashing, as fashionable, as accomplished, had so subsided into decrepitude, and drifted into extinction. The brilliant butterfly had become the dirtiest of grubs again. He was but one of a motley, brilliant, worthless million.

But if you want the rapidest coup d'œil—the most comprehensive bird's-eye view—here it is. A thousand table d'hôte dinners (many of them on credit) and a thousand days passed outside cookshops, with nothing to eat. Thousands of bottles of wine, some paid for, some to which he had been treated, many which he had cozened innkeepers

out of. Much brandy, many cigars; hecatombs of card-packs, legions of billiard-matches, a sack full of loaded dice, a shower of stamped paper, bearing his name, now as a drawer, now as acceptor, now as endorser. An occasional appearance in the English Insolvent Debtors' Court; one or two proclamations of outlawry; a ream of begging letters; a host of unpaid tailors; several beves of bayadères, and worse; half a dozen convictions for escroquerie, entailing lengthened residences in French, in Belgian, and in German jails; a few duels, more numerous canings and horsewhippings. Behold it all. He had ridden in carriages-and-four, he had been kicked down stairs; he had danced at balls and run away from landlords; he had been drunken and gay, and sick and in hospitals; but the route had always been downward, and it had come to this at last. And, as the Sibyl enhanced day by day the price of her portentous volumes, while they were diminished in number, even so did Mr. Francis Blunt require every day more brandy, and derive a smaller amount of comfort from that down-hill cordial.

His circle of existence was narrowing. Me-phistopheles' poodle was tracing more involved concentrics round him. The moral halter was tightening. He dared not show himself in London, in Brussels, at the German watering-places. Out of a dozen former friends whom he would meet by

chance, not ten, not eleven, but just the whole dozen, would cut him. When his name was mentioned, it was not as "poor devil"—he was beyond contemptuous charity—but as "horrible old scamp." The miserable man had no one to talk to now, but a few tavern waiters, gaming-house employés, dunning landladies, billiard-markers, police agents, and commissaries of police. His acquaintance with the two last-named classes was involuntary. The police were well aware of him. "Le nommé Blunt" was down in the blackest books of the Rue de Jérusalem. He was too old and drunken to be made useful as a spy. The alguazils quietly waited until they could catch him in flagrant délit, and cart him off to the galleys as a robber. He had ceased to have a regular lodging, and slept by the night in the worst "garnis" of the worst quarters, at fifteen sous. When he had no money, he prowled about the Champs Elysées. When he won, he would have a drinking-bout at the wine-shops in the Halles which are kept open all night, and would be an insolent Amphitryon to market-gardeners and sergents de ville, who scoffed at him while they drank at his cost. But those festive evenings were rare. He had reached, to all appearance, that stage in the gambler career, when a man *never wins heavily*, and when Fortune permits him only to pick up sufficient from the green cloth to save him from sheer starvation, and enable him

to support life while she tortures him. There were very few even tenth-rate cafés and estaminets, now, where he was welcome, or allowed to brawl and drivel over his brandy, or his absinthe. There is a phase in rascaldom when the rascal is even ostracised by his mates. Blunt had become a solitary rogue. "*Mauvais garnement*," cried the French raffs; "*A thorough rip*," sneered the English raffs who knew him. So he was left alone.

"And yet," he would moan piteously to himself, sometimes, "I have a brother in India who must be worth millions. Where is he? How came he to leave the service? Is he dead? I have written hundreds of letters to him in vain. Where is George Blunt?"

There was one place, indeed, of which he was free—one hostelry open for twelve hours out of the twenty-four—one caravanserai where he could enter. So long as he had a hat and coat they would admit him to the gaming-tables. The line was drawn at caps and blouses. So long as hats were hats and coats coats they were reckoned as belonging to the "*mise décente*," and their wearers were entitled to be called, in gaming-house parlance, "*Messieurs de la Galerie*."

This precious Gentleman of the Gallery then, on the morning in question, went up the well-worn stairs of Frascati's, and surrendered his hat and

stick to the janitor at the door, who knew Blunt well, and was, indeed, an ancient punter, on whom, when utterly broken down, the administration had taken compassion, and provided with a snug refuge for his declining days. He had seen men and cities, and knew all the folly of betting against the black, and all the madness of backing the red. And accordingly, once a month when his scanty wages were paid him, and he had a holiday, he very carefully backed the red and lost every sou at the gaming-table, and, next day, went back contentedly to take care of the hats and sticks.

A clean old gentleman in a shirt-frill, blue spectacles, nankeen pantaloons, and speckled grey stockings—the uncle in a vaudeville kind of gentleman—whispered behind his signet-ringed hand, as Blunt shambled towards the roulette-table, to a stately military made-up personage, with a tremendous spiked moustache, and the ribbons of half a dozen foreign orders at his button-hole :

“He was in luck yesterday. He backed the numbers, always putting a five-franc piece à cheval—on horseback. He must have won at least five louis. Had he been able to play gold instead of silver, he would have netted a hundred.”

“He will back the same number, you will see, to-day, and lose,” quoth the military personage, sententiously. “I am sick of seeing that old

scoundrel. I long to behold him sitting between two gendarmes on the benches of the court of assize."

Neither the clean old gentleman nor the military personage ever risked so much as a five-franc piece at the tables. It was strictly against their orders to play. Their business was to watch those who gambled; and there were others there, whose business it was to watch them. Both were spies of the police. But when the toils of the day were over, and they were off duty, the police gentry, and some select acquaintances among the croupiers, and the liveried lacqueys (whose services were perfunctory, and who were no more real footmen than the "greencoats" of the playhouse), would adjourn to a quiet wine-shop and gamble away their leisure hours in comfort and joy.

Blunt played from noon till four o'clock. Superstitious, as all gamblers are, he had dreamed, on three successive nights, that thirty-three was to be his lucky number at roulette. Understand, that, had he put a piece of money, or a bank-note on this number, and, when the ball had ceased revolving in the wheel, the number thirty-three, where it had halted, been proclaimed, he would have received thirty-five times his stake. But there were, of course, no less than six-and-thirty chances against him; and, his dream notwithstanding, his capital was too small (he had three louis

left after a night at the Halle) to risk even the smallest amount "en plein," or in full, on the number. He put his stakes on horseback: that is to say, on the yellow boundary line between the square numbered thirty-three, and the square numbered thirty-four: so that, according to the rules, if either of those numbers turned up, he was entitled to receive half thirty-five, or seventeen times his stake. Sometimes he shifted his piece, and put it, still on horseback, between thirty-three and thirty-two, thus doubling his chances of winning. Oh! he was cunning.

He began with a five-franc piece; won a little, lost a little; abstained from playing during a few rounds; then kept his hand in by staking on red, on black, on odd, or on even; then went back to the charmed square of thirty-three, and put ten francs on horseback. The wheel went round, and the ball jarred from compartment to compartment. "TRENTÉ-TROIS, noir, pair et passe," cried the banker.

With a rake the croupiers propelled towards the gamester seventeen times his stake, a hundred and seventy francs.

He drew the money together, separated two louis from it, crammed the rest into his breast-pocket, and placed them in the same position. Then the game was made, and the brass pillar was twirled, and the ball went whizzing round.

“TRENTÉ-QUATRE, rouge impair et manque,” cried the banker.

It being thirty-four, and the stake being entitled to share in half the gains in either number, they pushed seventeen times forty francs towards Blunt. He was now the possessor of eight hundred and fifty francs.

He had not had so much money for months. He calculated that he could spend a hundred francs in a riotous night, keep a hundred and fifty francs for eating and drinking, for emergencies, and still have a floating capital of six hundred francs, which, properly divided, would enable him to play for a whole week. To many gamblers of Mr. Blunt's calibre, who were watching his game, the same calculation presented itself. But, to the surprise of his neighbours, he never touched the eight hundred and fifty francs. It was in gold, and he let the pile remain between thirty-three and thirty-four. He shut his eyes, and screwed the lids close together. He folded his arms, and dug his nails into the palms of his hands. He felt that the back of his head was burning hot, and that his feet were icy cold. He gnawed his lips, and awaited the issue.

The pillar was twirled; the ball rushed round in mad gyration. Blunt heard it hopping up and down, to and fro, from the outer to the inner rim. Then its march was feebler; then it stopped. Then

there was silence ; and a voice like the sound of a trumpet came and smote him on the ear.

“TRENTÉ-TROIS,” it said, “noir, pair et passe.”

It was thirty-three. He had won fourteen thousand four hundred and fifty francs.

“By Jove!” cried a voice, in English, behind him ; “and I’ve been backing that confounded thirty-two in full instead of on horseback, and have lost every sou.”

Blunt turned round and saw a young gentleman, very handsome, very bold-looking, and very fashionably dressed.

“We are countrymen, it seems,” the gamester remarked, trying to muster up what he could of the ancient affable amenity of Francis Blunt, Esquire.

The young gentleman gave a haughty stare, and no direct answer.

“You’re in luck, old gentleman,” he condescended to observe.

“I am. Why didn’t you back my luck ? Are you so rare a punter as not to be up to that chance ?”

“I wasn’t thinking about it. I was intent on my own cursed number. And now I have lost all.”

Blunt had withdrawn his winnings at the end of the round, while he conversed with his neighbour, as most experienced gamblers will do, as a measure of precaution, and sometimes even before

they use their handkerchief, or take a pinch of snuff, lest an unexpected bleeding at the nose, or even a sudden fit of sneezing or coughing, should render them incapable of watching the chances of the game.

Francis Blunt, Esquire, had never in his most prosperous period been addicted to giving away money, or even to paying it when it was due. "Frank does not like parting with the shiners," was the verdict passed in sporting circles on his disposition to be tenacious of current cash. He would sow his acceptances at three months broadcast, but it was difficult to get a sovereign out of him. It is, however, one of the many superstitions of gamblers that luck may be conciliated by giving a piece of gold to a player who has just lost his last stake. The recipient of this bounty should be young, and preferably a woman, but ladies were excluded from Frascati's. Discipline must be preserved, even among the devils.

"And so you have lost all," Blunt said. He had not played for four rounds.

"Every liard."

The old punter had fourteen thousand four hundred and fifty francs. He could afford to be liberal. He took five louis from his breast-pocket, and placed them in the young man's hand.

"Accept this loan," he said, omitting, not through delicacy, but through avarice, to call it a

gift. "When you have won a hundred louis you can return it to me. But I advise you to back my luck."

The young man stared, hesitated, reddened slightly, passed his white fingers through his hair in a confused manner, then held out his hand and *took the money.*

"I can give it you back presently, you know, old gentleman," he stammered.

Yes; Mr. Edgar Greyfaunt took the money. He reddened, stammered, hesitated; but he took the money. Have you never been told that inveterate gambling has an inevitable tendency to harden the human heart, and to destroy in the gamester every sense of shame? Out of a gaming-house, Mr. Edgar Greyfaunt would have disdained to touch this shameful old creature's money. He looked like a beggar-man. But inside Frascati's, Mr. Greyfaunt was very glad indeed to accept it. He was young yet, you see, but after another year's apprenticeship even the blush, the stammer, and the hesitation, would have disappeared.

Blunt went on playing. He soon forgot all about the person to whom he had been so unwonted a benefactor. Nor did Mr. Greyfaunt preserve a long or a lively remembrance of his benefactor. "I'm not going to back the old rascal's luck," he said candidly to himself. "He'll lose his head presently, and be cleaned out." So,

as soon as he conveniently could, the grateful Mr. Greyfaunt slipped away with his five louis, and wandered away to the trente-et-quarante-table.

At three o'clock that afternoon the broken bankrupt, Francis Blunt, had won fifty thousand francs.

"I'll be a gentleman again," he chuckled to himself. "I wonder where that rascal Constant is. He'd be glad to shave and dress me again if I paid him the money I owed him. I'll find out my daughter and make a lady of her. I've got fifty thousand francs. That's two thousand pounds. By G— I'll break the bank before I've done with them."

He had been playing without any intermission, save his brief converse with Greyfaunt, since eleven o'clock. After four hours' gaming he felt faint. Stuffing his winnings, which, as his stakes had grown larger, had been gradually converted into notes, into his pocket, he went out to the restaurant attached to the establishment. He swallowed some soup and ate a cutlet, ordered a bottle of champagne, and drank the whole of it; then ordered a decanter of brandy, and drank the better part of that, too. The meat and drink warmed the cockles of his old heart, and made him feel braver in his rapacious intent. "I shall win a hundred thousand before eleven o'clock," he muttered. "A hundred, bah! Two hundred thousand. My hand's in.

My luck's hot. I wish it was the bones, though, instead of that child's play of roulette."

Toadies suddenly started up around him. Dila-pidated raffs, almost as greasy and as ragged as himself, but who that very morning had avoided his company as though it had been contagious, came and claimed acquaintance with him. They clapped him on the back, and congratulated him. He grinned, and bade them the rather congratulate the luck, since to that alone he was indebted for their society. But he was in a bounteous mood, and treated them plenteously. They would have borrowed money of him, but he had done enough in the way of pecuniary generosity. "As much brandy as you like," he said, "but not a centime."

He rose at about five, remarking that he would have another turn at the tables. He was, that afternoon, the lion of Frascati's, and a crowd followed him with eager eyes. He felt his head swimming and his legs trembling under him. He called for some soda-water, but there was none; there was only some insipid eau de Seltz, of which he took a draught, with some brandy. Then, evading his admirers for a moment, he slipped aside into a side-room, where the innocent games of chess and draughts—for Frascati's liked to keep up appearances—were supposed to be played, and which was consequently always empty. He drew a card-table to the door, knowing that at least he

should have fair warning if attempts were made to open it, and, sitting down, proceeded to pull off one of his boots. It was the fellow to the boot which had the hole in it disclosing the inked stocking. He flattened a thousand franc note down into the toe, and put on the boot again, and rose up with a leer.

"If the worst come to the worst," he thought, "we have this to fall back upon."

By seven o'clock he had won in all a hundred and fifty thousand francs, but he had made at least half a dozen dives into the restaurant and drunk more brandy. More than once the croupier had to remind him that he had left a bank note, unclaimed, on the table. He let money drop and refused to pick it up. He flung about his money recklessly; now on one stake, now on the other. But he kept on winning, winning, winning. He was drunk.

The largest stake allowed at Frascati's was twenty-five thousand francs—a thousand pounds. He put down this sum in twenty-five notes of a thousand on the red. Black turned up, and his twenty-five thousand francs were swept away.

He gave a tipsy yell, and said that he didn't care, and put down twenty-five thousand more, on the same colour. Again black turned up, and he had lost fifty thousand francs.

"He has lost his head," whispered the clean-looking old gentleman.

"It is the beginning of the end," the military personage said.

Half an hour afterwards, of all his winnings, Blunt had just one thousand francs left. The crowd were as absorbed in interest to see him lose, as they had been during the afternoon to see him win. The press around him was enormous. Some mounted on the benches at the back of the saloon to have a better view. He was still the lion of Frascati's, but a lion in the toils, a lion encompassed by the hunters, a lion at bay.

To his drunken memory it suddenly occurred that all his winnings had been made by betting on the numbers. But a long period had elapsed since he had abandoned his faithful thirty-three. He cast his last thousand franc note to a croupier, and told him to put it on "thirty-three."

"En plein ou à cheval—in full or on horse-back?" asked the croupier.

"In full; may as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb," stuttered Blunt, now very far gone.

The gallery were amazed at the desperation of the stake, for he admitted it to be his last. One friendly voice was raised to warn him against his peril.

"Put on five hundred! Cry out five hundred à la masse!" urged the voice, which belonged to a poor broken-down captain of the Grande Armée.

"Won't," mumbled Blunt. "Let it come up as it likes."

"At least put a louis, in case of accident, on zero. Zero hasn't been up for ninety rounds."

"Haven't got a louis left."

"Well, here is one," said the poor broken-down captain. "You're so drunk and so desperate, that something tells me that thirty-three or zero will turn up."

Blunt took the proffered louis, and tried, as steadily as he could, to roll it on end towards the compartment marked zero, which is close to the outer circumference of the wheel, in the middle of the table. But his aim, accurate enough when sober, failed him now. The coin stopped at the compartment marked "four," oscillated, and fell flat.

"For zero?" a croupier said inquiringly. He was close to the louis, and would have gently propelled it with his rake towards the designated spot; but Blunt, with a screech, forbade him.

"Let it be there," he said. "The devil will take care of his own."

"A thousand francs on thirty-three, and a single louis on zero," whispered the clean old gentleman; "the fellow must be mad. Any way he must lose."

The pillar revolved, the ball whizzed round and stopped. Then the banker called out:

"ZERO."

The rakes gathered in Blunt's thousand franc note and the poor broken-down captain's louis. He

did not care to ask his debtor when he would repay him. Justice Shallow had, perhaps, about as good a chance of being repaid the thousand pounds which Sir John Falstaff owed him. The poor broken-down captain was a philosopher. All he said was this :

“The imbecile! Why did he not insure on zero as I told him? At least thirty-five louis would have been saved out of the wreck, and some capital would have been left for future operations.”

Blunt was too old a hand to fall beneath the table in a fit, to tear his hair, or to beat his breast. He staggered away to the buffet, and asked the waiter to let him have a glass of brandy on credit. The superintendent nodded assent, and they gave him the liquor. He had lost so very largely as to be entitled to that trifling *pourboire*. Frascati had some bowels of compassion.

“Besides,” he said, as he drained the glass, “it’s only for a little time. I shall pay presently. There’s a fellow in the room owes me five louis. Has anybody seen him? A handsome fellow with curly hair.”

He had reached that stage of intoxication not uncommon with habitual toppers, when an additional glass of liquor rather sobers than stupifies. Blunt felt, for a moment, himself again. The lacqueys kept a keen eye upon him to turn him out (now that he was ruined) if he attempted to create a disturbance; but he went very composedly to and

fro and up and down, from the roulette to the trente-et-quarante, seeking for the fellow who owed him five louis.

He found the fellow at last. Mr. Edgar Greyfaunt's face was flushed and his eyes were sparkling. A pile of notes and gold was before him. He was winning largely.

"Hallo! old gentleman," he cried, as Blunt came up with pendent lip and bloodshot eyes. "Cleaned out, I suppose?"

"Ay!"

"Ah! you backed your luck a little too often. You'd better have been contented with a little. What a lot you were winning, to be sure. Stop! don't I owe you five louis? Here they are. And oblige me by going to another table, and playing by yourself, for, if you back *my* luck, it's sure to turn, and I shall lose."

Blunt thrust the money in his pocket, and turned on his heel in dudgeon. The young man's voice and manner seemed to him inexpressibly insolent. He skulked to the roulette-table, and changed his five pieces of gold into twenty pieces of five francs each. He wished to protract his agony as long as possible.

He played cautiously, timidly, nervously—eschewing the numbers altogether, waiting sometimes for a dozen rounds before there appeared what he deemed a favourable chance, shifting his paltry

stakes, now to red, now to black, now to odd, now to even, now to over, now to under. At one time he had scraped together some sixty or seventy francs; but luck again departed from him, and, as the clock struck ten, he had lost the last of his five louis.

He found out Edgar Greyfaunt again, who, still winning, was absorbed in the game. Blunt jogged his elbow.

"I am cleaned out again," he pleaded humbly. "When you were, too, I lent you five louis, and those I have had back, and spent. Lend me ten louis now, for Heaven's sake. There is only another hour left to play. Let me have one more chance."

"Go to the deuce!" cried Edgar Greyfaunt, pettishly, as he gathered in a handful of louis he had won.

"Only five louis, then," urged the miserable old man. "Make it five louis, for mercy's sake, and you shall have them back in five minutes. I didn't wait to be asked when I lent you the money."

"The more fool you," Mr. Greyfaunt coolly responded. "Don't bother me! You're making me play, all at sixes and sevens. Stop! here's a five-franc piece. It will get you a bed, and some breakfast in the morning."

The ancient spirit of Francis Blunt, Esquire—

the remembrance that he had once been a gentleman—rose for a single moment, and chased away the miasma of misery, the fumes of brandy and tobacco, which hung about him as a mantle. By a mechanical movement, he clutched at the proffered dole, but, lifting his shaking hand, he flung it at the head of Mr. Edgar Greyfaunt, accompanying the act by a storm of fierce invective addressed to that young gentleman.

The beggared gamester was speedily seized round the body by two of the powdered footmen. It was intolerable that the decorous conduct of so important a game as *trente-et-quarante* should be interrupted by the frenzied violence of this tattered and disreputable person. The entrance of the saloons must be henceforward interdicted to him. Monsieur the Commissary of Police said as much. The commissary came forward, unbuttoned his waistcoat, and showed his tricolored scarf beneath. To the powdered footmen he threw the significant words "*A la porte!*" So it was to the door with him. Turn him out! Send him packing! There was some little scuffling and scraping along the floor, and there was some little snarling and sputtering, as he was half-dragged, half-pushed through the sumptuous saloons he was to behold never more. A few of the players turned, looked, shrugged their shoulders, grinned, took snuff, and went on backing the red or the black. They got Blunt out without

much difficulty, though he kicked a good deal, and tried to bite one of the lacqueys. They bundled him down stairs, and flung his hat after him : detaining his stick as a lethal weapon capable of working mischief.

"And thank your stars, my brave," remarked the footman who gave him his final shove into the Rue de Richelieu, "that we do not send for the sergents de ville, and have you taken to the nearest post. I think you would be grateful, even for a bed at the guard-house."

"Curse you!" cried the wretched old man, gathering up all his sobriety and all his strength. "Curse you and your thieving crew! Take that!" And he hit out—he had been a bruiser in his youth—and caught the menial cleverly under the jaw.

The Frenchman, to whom kicking and caning were tangible entities, but who did not understand fisticuffs, set up a dismal yell; but before he had recovered himself sufficiently to cry "A la garde! à la garde!" Blunt had staggered away, and was beyond pursuit.

The miserable old fellow was haunted by a vague impression that he had some money about him somewhere: but in what place he tried desperately, vainly, to remember. He turned out his pockets, and pulling off his hat, searched the lining. But his efforts were fruitless. He began to cry, and was a sorry sight to see.

CHAPTER XVI.

BEHIND THE MADELEINE.

BEHIND the church of the Madeleine, Rataplan—ex-drummer of the Imperial Guard, ex-landlord of the Hôtel Rataplan, hard by Leicester-square, London—kept a tavern for the accommodation of English visitors to the only city in the world worth living in.

Rataplan was old, his eye was glassy, his hand tremulous, his voice husky, and his frame feeble, but he was as fat as ever. His adiposity was pendulous and flabby now, not firm and juicy, but it was fat, nevertheless, and, at his age, that was something to be thankful for.

Rataplan had given up cooking. It fatigued him too much, he said. It was much if the visitors to his hostelry could obtain a biftek aux

pommes, or an underdone slice from an ill-roasted joint. Rataplan's long residence in Albion had not disabused his mind of the impression that all English people liked their meat very nearly raw ; and whenever an English groom (say) or a workman employed at some factory in Paris ordered a beefsteak to be cooked in the English fashion, Rataplan would answer, "I know, ver well red, n'est-ce-pas ? Well bleeding, bien saignant, hein ?"

Nor had the good man's protracted sojourn in the perfidious country enabled him to attain anything approaching a copious, or even fluent, acquaintance with its language. A stock of idiomatic expressions he had, indeed, laid up, which would have seemed to argue some familiarity with our vernacular, but he still, to all intents and purposes, spoke English execrably.

He wore the attire of a petty bourgeois now, in lieu of his old and unvarying culinary costume. It did not improve his personal appearance much. He had looked as well, if not better, in his white jacket, apron, and nightcap, cloudy in hue as those habiliments habitually were, than in a shabby snuff-coloured surtout with a cotton velvet collar, a dingy nankeen waistcoat, striped trousers much too short for him, and a cloth cap with a peak to it.

Affairs had not gone prosperously with him at the Hôtel Rataplan. He had failed to make any-

thing like a competency, much less a fortune, out of that establishment. In the first place, Mademoiselle Adèle, his daughter, had made a mésalliance: having, in defiance of her father's commands, not only encouraged the addresses of a dissolute fiddler at the French Plays, but absolutely got up very early one morning and allied herself in marriage to that objectionable person. It was a terrible blow for Rataplan. "Encore," he was wont to say, "if they had gone to the Bavarian chapel in Warwick-street! But Mademoiselle must needs immolate herself at a church of I know not what sect of the Anglican dissidence in the Soho. She had abjured, forsooth, the errors of the Romish communion! Wicked men with white neckcloths and little paper books had been, it appears, pursuing her for months. She became what you call a convert. She was the victim of their machinations sourdes. Parlez-moi de ça. You sacrifice yourself like the pelican of the wilderness. You tear out your entrails to nourish a viper, and behold the viper turns round and stings you. Encore, had it been in France, my daughter would have been compelled to address to me three solemn citations—trois sommations respectueuses—before she could have dared to commit the fatal act. But she has accomplished her act of disobedience and folly, and now this vagabond of a fiddler beats my Adèle. Ma parole

d'honneur, c'est à faire blanchir les cheveux. It is enough to make one's hair turn white."

It would have taken an extreme degree of agony to turn Papa Rataplan's hair white. He had none to turn; he was quite bald.

Then la Mère Thomas died, and Rataplan had to bury her. Then his customers fell off, and he lost the most profitable of his guests, the hot-tempered Countess, who suddenly disappeared. Then Rataplan got into trouble with the police for winking at the contraband amusements of a select society of cooks in the employ of divers noblemen, gentlemen, and hotel-keepers in the British metropolis, who were accustomed to dine at the Hôtel Rataplan, and afterwards to play vingt-et-un all night. He was threatened with the loss of his license. The threat did not do him much harm, for the butcher sued him, and then the distiller put an execution into the premises, and finally there came collapse, and Rataplan passed through the Bankruptcy Court.

He bore his downfall with becoming resignation. He carefully returned as bad, all the debts owing to him by his countrymen, and by this stroke of policy not only obviated the possibility of their being pressed for payment, but moved a few of them, through personal gratitude, to pay him, after he had undergone the ordeal of white-washing, some few pounds by way of bonus. "It

will enable me to cultivate my cabbages," he remarked, philosophically.

Returning to his native country, a gleam of good fortune shot unexpectedly across his path. He met with a person whom he had not seen for ten years. This person was Jean Baptiste Constant, ex-body-servant to Francis Blunt, Esquire, who had always been of an active and pushing turn of mind, and had gone into business at Chaillot as a manufacturer of paper-hangings, and was doing, according to his own account, pretty well. He was anxious to realise a fortune, he said; not for himself, but he had some one to leave it to. But where was that some one? To his misery and despair he could not tell. What had become of the Countess and of her child? They had disappeared, no one could say which way. He kept up a correspondence with friends in half the towns in Europe, but had never been able to obtain a scintilla of information relating to Lily or her mother. The Countess seemed to have vanished from the stage, or rather from the ring. In the chronicles of the sawdust she was no longer known, even by her horse-riding name.

Jean Baptiste Constant commiserated the decayed state of his old friend Rataplan. The bankrupt hotel-keeper said he had had, by this time, quite enough of England, and that he only desired to re-enter London once more, if it were possible

at the head of an invading army of his countrymen. "How I would sack Laycesterre-squarr, and give up the 'Aymarket to the pillage," he was wont to murmur between his set teeth, grinding them meanwhile. "Yes; and that street most infamous, of the Basinghall. Ah! not one of the functionaries of that tribunal so proud, from the insolent president to the lowest huissier, but should passer par les armes,—all, all, be put to the sword." The vindictiveness of Rataplan was insatiable and inexorable.

So Jean Baptiste Constant, after meditating for a time as to how the old man's knowledge of a country he professed to detest so much could best be utilised, determined to set him up in business again in a little twentieth-rate café, then for sale, just behind the church of the Madeleine. The street was new; the Rouen and Havre Railway, the erection of whose terminus in the Rue d'Amsterdam has so revolutionised this part of Paris, was not yet dreamt of; the rent was very low, and the coming in very reasonable. Rataplan was once more gratified by becoming a landlord. In the evening of life it was again his privilege to cook and to command. Still were the conditions imposed upon him by his friend, patron, and benefactor, Jean Baptiste, not devoid of a certain degree of severity. "Rataplan, mon bon," said the ex-valet to the rehabilitated bankrupt, "you

tried long enough to set up a little Paris in the midst of London. That was to please yourself. You made, unless I am mistaken, rather a mess of it. Now, if you have no objection, you shall please *me*. I want you to set up a little London in the midst of Paris."

"Never, never!" Rataplan would at first and vehemently protest. "*Jamais en France l'Anglais ne règnera*. No, no, a hundred times no. Between Rataplan and Albion, the thrice perjured and perfidious, there yawns a gulf of hatred and scorn, which blood, and blood alone, can cumulate."

"Very well," the valet would gravely reply. "You shall sell bifteks bien saignants. That is blood, is it not? One must accomplish his destiny, my Rataplan, and yours is to do as you are told."

In the end, Rataplan submitted, cheerfully enough, to the accomplishment of his destiny, and did as he was told, most loyally. He entered, at first grumbling, but at last smiling, into the plans of J. B. Constant. They were worthy of that astute and experienced operator. The dingy little Café-Estaminet Pharamond in the Rue Cuit-au-Four, that miserable den where you could procure nothing but tough flaps of beef, fried potatoes, burnt bean and chicory coffee, corrosive absinthe, questionable cognac, lettuce-leaf cigars,

boxes of rickety dominoes, and greasy packs of cards, suddenly started into a fresh phase of existence as the Café Restaurant Chesterfield. At first, J. B. Constant had thought of christening his establishment "Le Clarendon," "Le Mivart," "Le Cavendish," or "Le Mansion House;" but, on reflection, he admitted that there were difficulties in the way of the proper pronunciation by foreign lips of nearly all those names. But every Frenchman has heard of Milor Chesterfield, and among the natives the Café Restaurant Chesterfield soon attained considerable notoriety; while to the special class of sojourners in Paris whom Constant hoped to secure as patrons, the word Chesterfield had not only an English but a sporting sound, and, consequently, soon became very popular.

The patrons he had pitched upon were a curious race. In every great city, much frequented by foreigners, there are two under-currents of a town life: first, the retainers of the high and mighty strangers who are on their travels; and, next, the shiftless and out-of-elbows creatures who, having once come abroad, are prevented by poverty from getting home again. Sometimes they contrive, after years of borrowing and begging, to raise sufficient funds to return to the country which has no longer any need of them; but in many instances they never do get home, and, shuffling

through a shabby and disreputable life, on the few wits a craving for bad brandy has left them, die at last, and are buried in the Potter's Field. Such people every continental metropolis numbers by hundreds or by thousands. Generally they belong to the English nation. We do not consider ourselves to be foreigners, anywhere; so my countrymen will understand what I mean in saying that foreigners have usually very little difficulty in foregathering, intermingling with, and assimilating themselves to other foreigners. This the Englishman rarely if ever does. He is, to the end, insular, carries something about him that is purely, peculiarly, and—to others but his compatriots—repulsively, English wherever he goes, and leaves at last his coffin to be covered with a phantom Union Jack. Do you know Jack Moseley—they say the “ley” is an interpolation between where an “e” is, and an “s” should be in his name—the tall, handsome Israelite, whom his friends call the Wandering Jew, and who has been travelling and trading in diamonds from the Minorities to the Straits of Malacca any time these twenty years? Well, Jack told me he was coming the other day from the Warhoe diggings in California, overland to Florence in the State of Missouri. It was somewhere in the Rocky Mountains, I think. It was at night, and he was huddled up in a stage-coach, asleep, and dreaming of bears, wolves, and

wild Indians. Suddenly the coach broke down, but fortunately close to a little tavern. Jack Moseley rubbed his eyes and thought he was still dreaming, when, alighting, he found himself in front of the precise model of an English wayside inn. There was the bench, there was the horse-trough, in front; there were the red and white blinds to the windows; there was the bar, with its big cheese in full cut, its pork pies, its row of gaily-painted kegs of cordials, and its well-polished beer-engine. There was the little parlour, with its neatly sanded floor, its triangular spittoons, its rack of churchwarden pipes, and its coloured prints of fights for the championship, racing cracks, and Sir Tatton Sykes in top-boots, affably conversing with his trainer, who was bald-headed, white cravated, and respectful, in drab gaiters. There was a grinning ostler, there was a stout potboy, there was a spruce waitress; there was positively a one-eyed bulldog on the premises. On the coffee-room blinds there flourished the approved golden legends as to chops and steaks that were always ready, dinners that were to be dressed, neat wines and soda-water; but wonder of wonders! what do you think the sign was? Not the "George Washington," not "The Jefferson," not the "Bold Digger," not the "Big Nugget," not the "Lucky Placer," but "The Osbaldistone Arms." The landlord was an American born, but his grandfather had been

a groom in the Osbaldistone family in England. He subscribed to Bell's Life and the local Yorkshire papers regularly, and his little house looked as though some magician had suddenly caught it up from the English north country and dropped it down in the middle of the Rocky Mountains.

Rataplan, incited by J. B. Constant, did his best to Anglicise the Café Restaurant Chesterfield. A little England sprang up in the Rue Cuit-au-Four, looking as strange there as the English colony of Heligoland at the mouth of the Elbe. The partners imported the double and biting Gloucester, the luscious Cheshire, the voluptuous cheese of Stilton. English ale and English porter were always on draught, and a joint, of as near an approach to English beef as could be procured at the butcher's in the neighbouring Rue St. Lazare, was always in cut. Sandwiches were displayed under glass covers, to the intense amazement of the French customers, who, sometimes trying them, frequently managed to drop the layer of meat on the floor, and, when they burnt their mouths with the fiery English mustard, howled dismally. Nor was English gin forgotten; nor did the craft which Rataplan had learnt in London, of making three quarts into one gallon, forsake him now.

M. Jean Baptiste Constant moved about the establishment of which Rataplan was the manager and the nominal landlord, but in which the wary

ex-body servant of Mr. Francis Blunt had taken care to secure a proprietorial interest in his usual discreet and demure, not to say stealthy, manner. Every knife, fork, and napkin in the place was his; yet you would not have thought, to look at him, that he would have ventured to take a spoonful of salt without permission. He rarely interfered with Rataplan's arrangements. He allowed him undivided control in the kitchen. He permitted him to scold his two waiters, and to overcharge the guests as much as ever he liked. He allowed him a fair share in the profits, which had, in a short space of time, grown to be considerable: but he was nevertheless lord paramount and absolute over the Café Restaurant Chesterfield. He liked to sway this secret power, to have this occult veto, to be behind the scenes, and pull the wires, and make the puppets dance. It suited his pensive, bilious, cat-like, contemplative nature. The sunshine was too strong for him. He blinked, and the pupils of his eyes contracted in the noontide glare. He had not been accustomed to it in youth. He could bask; but he preferred to bask in the shade, and down in a cellar.

He liked to breakfast at the Chesterfield sometimes, just to see how things were going on: paying for his meal, like a man, at the counter. The waiters did not know exactly what to make of him. They were both Swiss, who had been

abroad, and picked up more or less "pigeon English" in Haymarket cafés and Leicester-square hotels. One of them, Jules, imagined him to be a kind of pensioner or hanger-on of the establishment, boarded from time to time, through charity, by the patron Rataplan. The other, Alphonse, had a somewhat shrewder notion of his standing in the house. "I will wager," Alphonse would say to his intimates, "that this monsieur is le bailleur de fonds—the capitalist—the finder of money to the Café Restaurant Chesterfield."—"But how can he be a capitalist," the duller-witted Jules would expostulate. "He never scolds us. He never calls us 'nigaud,' or 'cochon.' Is that like a bailleur de fonds."—"Bah!" Alphonse would retort. "Jules, thou hast an excellent heart, but thou hast a skull of wood, filled with sauce à la tartare in place of brains. Do kings and queens always wear their crowns? Was the Emperor always crossing the Alps on a white horse, mocking himself of the thunder and lightning? I tell thee, ganache, that still waters run deep, that l'eau qui dort is the most dangerous, and that the great art of capitalists consists in never appearing to have any money. My uncle from Basle was a capitalist. In the commerce of grains he acquired millions; yet to look at him thou wouldst not have thought that he had possessed two red liards to rub one against another. What, yet another game at

dominoes? Come, then, phenomenon of temerity, and I will play thee for the third chopine."

On a particular morning which it is desirable to fix in the reader's mind, Jean Baptiste Constant was breakfasting at the Café Restaurant Chesterfield, and he had company. Two sat down to breakfast with him. He had first invited the patron Rataplan to be a partaker of the meal, and the other guest was a florid well-looking gentleman enough, with very large black whiskers, now slightly inclining to grey, and who was very gorgeously attired in a frogged and braided surtout, and a cap with a tassel of gold bullion. This gentleman spoke most European languages with equal fluency, and with equal incorrectness. He was a travelling courier by profession, and his name was Franz Stimm.

The three men had evidently taken a copious meal of oysters, omelette, and cold roast beef, washed down by English bottled stout (few foreigners who have visited England, be it for ever so short a time, surmount the predilection they acquire for the brown beer of Albion) and some of Rataplan's best red wine. They were now at the stage of coffee, brandy, and cigars, and were unmistakably enjoying themselves.

"I did not like de goffees zo much as de joggolates," Mr. Stimm observed, between whiffs of his very powerful cigar; "de joggolates is più

graziosos, and besser vor the stomjacks; but de zigarettes is not goot mit de joggolates nor de gocos, and de goffees tastes him besser."

"You are always talking of your stomach, friend Stimm," Constant observed. "I wish you would talk to me about that little girl you met, ever so many years ago, on board the Boulogne steamer, when you were travelling with your general."

"Vat vor it is goot to talk about de liddle gals?" replied Franz Stimm, with a sigh. "We shall not none of us never see her again. She goms like de shadow of a liddle vairy, and, pouf! she go away like dis ring of dobbacco-smoke dat go up do de zeiling and vade away nobody can say vere de debbel vere to."

"And yet all of us would give thousands, millions—at least, much that is valuable to us," continued Constant, "to meet that child. Child! she must be grown into a woman by this time."

"And a peautiful ones, too," interposed the courier. "She was the angelikest liddle zylphide mine eyes ever did light itself upon."

"For the child," Rataplan said, "that!" He snapped his fingers as he spoke. "I have no more children, and care little to hear about them. Yet would I give something to find that woman. The tigress! the fury! the abandoned creature, lost to all sense of morality, honour, decency, virtue."

"She owes you money, Papa Rataplan." This was from Constant.

"Twenty sovereigns sterling. She never paid her bill the last time she descended at the Hôtel Rataplan. It is a flagrant injustice. It is an infamy. She defrauded, swindled me, out of my dues. She had the finest vins of Champagne, and of the little wines of Burgundy. She owes me even for the cigarettes she smoked, the depraved and epicurean bacchante! Her flight without discharging my addition was the last act of perfidy to which, in a perfidious and shameless land, the miserable Rataplan had to submit. But I will be avenged. I will demand justice. Yet shall the tribunals be seized of the details of this most tenebrous and scandalous affair. I desire to re-enter into my funds. I demand the provisional arrestation, the prise de corps, against this woman sans foi ni loi." And Rataplan struck the table with his clenched fist, and filled himself another petit verre.

"You are taking la goutte too early, Papa Rataplan," Constant said, discreetly withdrawing the decanter of cognac from the excited landlord's reach. "Suppose we finish these libations and take a walk."

"Vid all my hearts," Mr. Stimm acquiesced, rising. "My heads is strongs enough for much more gouttes, but we gan dake them in de open

airs, and Franz Stimm can then have de bleasure of reciprocifying dis most gharmining hospitalities. Gom and smokes in de oben air, and we can dalk about de liddle gals. Blezz her liddle heart."

"But the establishment," pleaded Rataplan, nervously.

"The establishment," said Constant, gaily, "can be left to the waiters and the dame du comptoir for an hour or two. The Café Restaurant Chesterfield won't run away. Allons, messieurs, I am at your service."

"Gom and dalk about de liddle gals," repeated the courier.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE RIVER-BANK.

HE who writes these lines was, many years since, dining in a cheap restaurant in the Palais Royal. He liked to dine in state; but, being poor, was forced to put up with the second-floor splendour of the great Palace of Gormandising. The glass is as glittering, and the gilding as gaudy in the attic as in the basement of this place, only, there is a diminution of price correspondent to the ascent you make, and, by an odd paradox, you lose caste as you mount. What matters it? If that which they call a poulet à la Marengo on the first floor be, as they assert, a nasty mess hashed up from the scourings and leavings of better cook-shops, and the poulet down stairs be a triumph of the art in which Carême and Ude excelled, it must come to

the same thing in the long run. Abate a little for the difference in flavour—and what is flavour? Is there anything nastier than an olive, or caviar, or the trail of a woodcock, at first tasting? You will find both dishes equally rich in colour, multifarious in ingredients, rich and sloppy. And both will make you equally bilious the next morning.

He of whom I write, then, being pinched in purse, dined, not at Véfour's below, but at the humbler Richard's above. He had some youth and health remaining, then. He could look upon the wine when it was red, or even when it was the lividest ordinaire ever manufactured, without dreading its after effects. He paid his forty sous; had his three courses; fed, and was content.

Now here was a thing which struck him between his third service and his dessert, on the instant occasion consisting of a pear—a pear so swollen, supine and sleepy, that, being a Radical young man at that period, he likened it to an Elder Brother of the Trinity House. The thing struck him thus. Richard's is *very* brave indeed, in looking-glasses. There are mirrors on every side of you. Though ever so solitary at a table, you need never, if reflexion can help it, be alone. You have the company of yourself. Eyes right and eyes left, and then turn volte-face: so you are quadrupled. You become twins twice over: quins, if I may coin such a word.

The person discoursed of, however, was satisfied with using the knife, fork, and plate before him as a plane of perspective, and looked straight before him without changing his base. In front of him was a very large looking-glass in a very gay gold frame. Naturally, in this he saw himself. Naturally, also, he saw reflected in the looking-glass which was at the other end of the dining-hall, another self of his, taken dorsally. And, in equal obedience to the immutable laws of nature, the starting-points of reflexion and refraction being once established, there stretched before him an interminable vista of mirrors that were before and mirrors that were behind, of front selves and back selves, of table-knives, forks, and chandeliers over and over again, to infinity. So, lately, standing upon a high tower upon a rock, looking upon the Falls of Niagara, did this same person ask, unthinkingly, and like a fool as he was, of the negro who was his guide, whether the rush of waters were always in that wise: whereon the black man answered him, not according to his folly, but in simple wisdom: "I 'spect, mas'r, it's gwine on so for ebber and ebber." For ever and ever. The solemn words brought the scene of the looking-glass back to his mind. They too went on for ever and ever. Although the vanishing lines of the perspective diminished at last to a pin's point, and their continuity was undiscernible to the keenest

gaze, there must have stretched on, more and more microscopically delineated, myriads upon myriads more looking-glasses, tables, knives, forks, and diners. The old schoolmen used to hold disputations on the numbers of legions of angels that could dance on the point of a needle. The thesis is not so absurd as it seems. Give us but a lens of sufficient magnifying power, and we might discover how upon some spicula of matter ten thousand times finer than a "Coventry hundred," not thousands, but millions of God's creatures, having heads, and lungs, and ducts, and bowels, and lives, do dance.

The looking-glasses, then, went on for ever and ever. There could not be an end to them, for they had two ends. There could not be a beginning, for there were two beginnings, or rather the beginning was the end, and the end was the beginning, for the foremost mirror did no more and no less in glancing back its fellow than did the hindermost one. It was the old story of the serpent with its tail in its mouth.

And while he who had paid forty sous for his dinner was gazing on this, and musing upon it, the deft waiter approached him from behind with the sleepy pear. He saw him in the glass. He was a very white-faced waiter, and his grin was ghastly. Late hours, much gas, and the steam of many dinners, had made him hopelessly pallid. Never

too much flesh had he, I wot, and that which he had originally possessed had wasted away beneath the influence of the gas-burners and the stew-pans, so that he looked now, merely as though a wan leathery integument had been drawn for decency's sake over his skull. With his closely-cropped cranium, whiskerless jaws, gleaming teeth, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, white cravat, with his monstrous bow, and ever present smirk, he was uncommonly like a genteel death's head. Something like a shudder came over the guest as he looked upon this fetch of Mortality, smirking in the midst of the vast image of Eternity streaming away from him. As there were more mirrors, so were there more Death's-head waiters; and they encompassed him on every side, and went on for ever and ever. Oh! mortal man, for ever and ever.

That Life should be so dovetailed into Death, faster and firmer than the cunningest joiner, with his glue and his mortice, ever dreamt of, is but natural, is but the way of the world, is but decreed beyond our comprehension and our conception. Better, perhaps, to take them as they come, and wait for the end in humble hope, than to continue peering into the looking-glasses till we go mad.

Much the more so, as the yellow forehead of the King of Terrors is often wreathed with flowers, as the worm that never dies has the prettiest painted skin imaginable, as Death is but the reverse side of

an arras all woven in gay designs representing the innocent pastimes of Arcadia, and the lives of gods and goddesses. What did Mr. Wordsworth's simple child, down Rydal Mount way, know of death? The churchyard was her playground. Those who slept beneath were not dead, but her brothers and sisters, and they were seven. Death, after all, is of the chameleon kind. Scan him very narrowly and he changes hue. Get over the embarrassment of a first acquaintance, and he turns out to be somebody else. He is no longer Death, but Life Eternal.

Now, there was a certain little maiden who had lived all her life on the very brink of the grave; who had been cradled, as it were, in a coffin, and swaddled in cerecloths, and whose playthings were, after a manner, skulls and cross-bones, a mattock and a spade. Of course I am speaking metaphorically. The certain little maiden, pretty little Mademoiselle Amanda, had no bodily acquaintance with the ugly things I mention. Yet she knew all about them, heard them talked about every hour in the day, lived over them and bore their icy neighbourhood with great philosophy. Why should she trouble her innocent young head about such horrors? She had been for long years accustomed to them; besides, they were her good papa's business, not hers. She was very fond of her good papa. She was very fond of everybody. She was

but seventeen years of age; and at that period of life I have known youngsters who were fond of spiders and monkeys, and the ugliest of dogs, and the crossiest of cats.

Mademoiselle Amanda lived in the left wing of the Edifice, which was but one story high. The Edifice was called (I am afraid) The Morgue. Her good papa had his office in the opposite wing, and there he kept his huge vellum-bound and brass-clamped registers, which were quite as bulky, and well-nigh as numerous, as the books of a London banking-house. Papa was a public functionary. He held a responsible post in the service of the good city of Paris, and lodging, fire, and candles were allowed him gratis. Amanda's sitting and bed room were just over the large room on the ground floor, occupied by the lodgers in the Edifice. The lodgers never disturbed her, although they came in at all hours, some of them very unseasonable. They were the quietest lodgers in the world. They seldom stopped more than two or three days, and, strange to say, they paid nothing for their bed, or their board—if that could properly be called board which was in reality stone. Amanda's parlour was quite a grove of singing-birds. She had two canaries, she had a thrush, she had a linnet. She had a blackbird who sung the "*Marseillaise*" and the "*Parisienne*"—airs not then entirely prohibited in France—but who discreetly

avoided the imputation of being an out and out Republican of the red kind by now and then tuning up "*La Belle Gabrielle*" and "*Vive Henri Quatre*," but who was not, by any means, a Bonapartist bird, seeing that he could never be persuaded to give so much as a bar of "*Partant pour la Syrie*."

Amanda's walls were hung with pretty lithographs and water-colour drawings. On her balcony, overlooking the old houses on the quays, with their high roofs and blinking little windows, with the narrow bright blue Seine shining between, and the towers of Notre-Dame overlooking all, she had a miniature conservatory. Yes, she had roses and geraniums and forget-me-nots, and the modest sweet-smelling *mignonnette*. She adored flowers: so seemingly did Blaise, her cat, though oftentimes chastised for lying perdu among the foliage, whence at his ease he could blink with covetous eyes upon the birds in their cages. She was fond of music too, this accomplished little Amanda, and had not only a pretty cottage piano made by Pleyel, but absolutely a harp—a harp from the great Erard's factory. Her good papa denied her nothing. Sheets of music lay about—dulcet little *barcaroles*, and romances, and *chansonnettes*, the which she warbled, accompanying herself meanwhile with such sweetness and such grace, as frequently to elicit from her guests twitters of approv-

ing criticism. Then she drew—drew very prettily, too. Big classical heads with round chins, vacant eyes, broad foreheads, and tresses like coils of rope. These she finished in Italian chalk on tinted paper, to the delight of her professor, who was a mighty man from the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. Did she paint? Yes, flowers, and a little landscape. Anything else? Well, she embroidered charmingly; was not too fond of novel reading for a girl of her age, choosing even then the demurest of fictions, and utterly eschewing the fascinating but perilous *MM. Dumas* and *Paul de Kock*. She was very good and pious. She went regularly to mass, and had *ses pauvres*—her poor, whom she tended and succoured quite as though she had been a staid middle-aged person. As yet, her heart had said nothing to her. She had been to a ball but thrice in her life. Men, with the exception of *Monsieur Philibert*, she regarded as sweet and noble creatures, but still as devouring monsters to be feared and fled from. *Ces terribles Messieurs*, she called them. *Monsieur Philibert* she did not fear. He was old and fat, and she had known him long, and he was papa's good friend.

Little Amanda's mamma was dead. Nobody but herself, her father, and a *bonne*, lived on the first (and consequently top) floor of the Edifice. Down stairs there were people who took care of the lodgers, but she never saw them. There was

a side-door for her to go out at, and once a week or so, when business was slack—for the lodgers were very capricious as to the time of their coming, though exceedingly regular as to that of their going—Amanda's papa would take her to dine en ville, and then to some little boulevard theatre, whence she would come back skipping and clapping her hands, and humming over the airs of the vaudeville couplets she had heard. The little girl was as good as gold, and as happy as the day was long.

On the very same morning that Jean Baptiste Constant was entertaining his friends at the Café Restaurant Chesterfield, Amanda, too, had company in the first floor of the Edifice. Lily was there. Now, I am afraid that Madame de Ker-golay would have been very angry indeed had she known that her protégée was paying such a visit, or was in such a place. It was, perhaps, the queerest place in the world for a young lady who was being educated in genteel notions to find herself in. But it was all Madame Thomas's fault. That good woman could see that Lily was unhappy, that she was mourning in secret. She half divined the cause of her sorrow. She strove to assuage it by every means in her power, to divert the young girl's mind, and to lead her to more cheerful thoughts. "*Ces jeunesses*—these young ones are always the same. They get an

idea into their heads, and it takes a hydraulic machine to get it out again. Let us try to amuse her. Let us strive to make her gay. She must be dull sometimes in that old place of ours. Yes, she must be in love. Malediction upon love, and yet one can hardly help blessing it at the same time. What an old fool I am! If Ma'amselle Lily is in love, I cannot expect her to make a confidante of an old, worn-out, battered thing like me. Let us place her in contact with something young, and fresh, and innocent, to whom she can tell half her secret, and who will guess the rest. Did I say young, and fresh, and innocent? Ah, ma foi, they are all ready to guess *ce calembourg-là*. They can all find out what love is. Allons, I will take her to see Amanda. There can be no harm in that."


Amanda was one of Madame Thomas's great cronies. She had known and loved her ever since she was a little child. She had an awful reverence for Amanda's papa, whom she called Monsieur le Gardien; she had known his wife, that amiable blonde woman, with a perpetual cold in her head, which had ultimately got into her stomach, and so, reaching her feet, killed her. She entertained the profoundest respect for Monsieur Philibert, who, whenever he met her, rarely failed to regale her with the latest on dits and the choicest snuff. The first floor over the Edifice

was, indeed, Madame Thomas's great gossiping shop. Whenever she had half an hour to spare, she would slip away and revel in chat. Nor did her patronage of the Edifice stop there. Madame Thomas wasn't exactly a ghoul. She wasn't a vampire. She had no cruelty in her composition. She was a very kind-hearted old woman, well enough disposed to be jovial on occasion; but she had, in common with a great number of other old women, a secret and irresistible penchant for that which some persons are accustomed to call the horrible. She couldn't help it. About people's tastes it is useless to dispute. Everybody has his taste, his whim, his fancy, his hobby. Madame Thomas had hers. She did not carry it to excess, but she was forced to gratify it sometimes. She liked to trot down stairs, at the termination of her gossip on the first floor of the Edifice, and see how the lodgers were getting on. It did her good. She liked it, although she was not very far removed from that period of life when she might reasonably expect to become a lodger herself, a permanent one, although not in *that* edifice. Sometimes the lodgers were green, and Madame Thomas would take a great deal of snuff; sometimes they were blue, at which she would take more, and cry "Pouah!" And not unfrequently they would be both green and blue.

Amanda did her best to entertain her guests.

She bustled about, putting her birds through the most winning of their ways, and by clever tapping at the bars of their cages, and tempting them with bits of sugar between her pretty lips, eliciting from them the sweetest of their carols. Of her flowers, too, she made great show, blowing aside their petals, and turning up their delicate leaves to show her visitors. Then she sat down to the piano, and played some of her liveliest pieces; and then—no severer critics being near than a young girl as innocent as herself, and an old woman who knew no more of music than she did of Greek—she sang some arch little French songs—songs that had refrains like the fluttering of birds' wings, or the pattering of mice into their holes—songs which didn't mean much, and were mainly, if you please, nonsense; but which, at least, didn't mean mischief—at once a rarity and an advantage, I apprehend, in the vocal music of France the Fair.

By this it was breakfast-time. The *bonne* set the table, and laid out the simple summer cates on which the girl usually breakfasted—eggs on the plate, cream cheese, fruit, plenty of bread-and-butter, coffee, and a little thin red wine. "If good papa and Monsieur Philibert should come in," quoth Amandine, "their beefsteak and their omelette will be ready for them in five minutes." There was a stronger wine, too, for the use of



good papa and his friends. Strange to say, the wine was always kept in a cupboard on a level with the dwelling-rooms of the Edifice. They had a cellar down stairs: why didn't they store their Bordeaux and their cognac there? Well, Amanda didn't like the notion. Perhaps she thought the cellar, so near the Seine, was damp; perhaps she feared that those lodgers, usually so well behaved, might get up some night and inebriate themselves on her papa's potables. And the bare notion of one of those lodgers roaming about the cellar! Ugh!

By-and-by arrived good papa, and with him his ancient and constant friend, Monsieur Philibert. This last was the plumpest, rosiest, brightest-eyed, whitest-toothed, most contented-looking man you could wish to see on a summer's day, or out of the ranks of the twenty-seventh battalion of the Legion of the Seine, or out of the members of his own peculiar profession, which is saying a good deal. Philibert was a National Guardsman, and, as such, naturally wore spectacles, and was slightly inclined to corpulence. He was not quite a carpet warrior, however. That big bearskin, those epaulettes of scarlet worsted, those snowy cross-belts, had shown with distinction at several barricades, and had loomed large in the fore-front of the battle, when the Boulevard du Temple, after Fieschi's horrid attempt on the king's life, was

swept by troops. Philibert was not quite so angry with the half-crazy regicide as it would perhaps have beseemed a loyal man, bourgeois de Paris, and strong adherent of the order of things and the dynasty of July, to have shown himself. He spoke of the murderous Italian, pending his trial and condemnation, as "*le Monsieur*." Once he was heard to allude to him as "*le pauvre diable*." You see that Fieschi, with his infernal machine, although he missed the principal object of his hatred, and blew off, instead, his own fingers, and ultimately his own head, yet managed to kill Marshal Mortier, who, in full uniform, was riding by the side of Louis Philippe. And did not the murdered marshal have one of the grandest of funerals ever seen in Paris—triumphal car, winged Victories, gilt wreaths, pall of silver tissue, whole Birnam woods of ostrich plumes, horses draped in black velvet—every luxury, in fine? And was not Philibert there? Not Philibert in the bearskin and red epaulettes of the civic soldier, but Philibert in full new glossy black, in plaited and ruffled linen, in shorts and silk stockings—Philibert with the cocked-hat known as *chapeau bras* beneath his left arm, and a shining ebony truncheon tipped with silver in his right hand—Philibert with a dress-sword by his side, a silver chain round his neck, and silver buckles in his shoes? For he also

was a marshal of France, after a fashion, and had a right to bear a bâton.

He was, indeed, a master of the ceremonies attached to the Corporation of Undertakers—to the *Pompes Funèbres*—and in that capacity had conducted some of the most splendid funeral processions of modern times. The unthinking and the malicious called him a *croque-mort*, a vampire, a ghoul, but Philibert smiled philosophically at their sneers. The plump and rosy man was not only contented, but proud of his profession. “I shall yet live,” he would say, “to conduct the imposing ceremonies incidental to the interment of the great Napoleon, whose sacred remains are still detained by his barbarous and perfidious enemies on the Atlantic rock, where they slew him. What a funeral that will be! With the aid of the military force, the paraphernalia of the *garde-meuble*, and the choristers of the Opera, the *Pompes Funèbres* shall, please Heaven, far surpass all they have hitherto done. Funerals of Foy, Manuel, Louis the Eighteenth, S. A. R. the Duke of Berry—bah! those little parades of the Theatre shall all be thrown into the shade. When we file down the Champs Elysées on our way to the Invalides, something shall be seen.” Monsieur Philibert was an artist. Thus, though he half forgave Fieschi for shooting a marshal of France who could be sumptuously interred, he professed

the utmost horror and indignation at the fate of the humble workmen and workwomen, victims to the indiscriminate massacre caused by the infernal machine. "Is not the fosse commune—the common ditch at Montmartre—gorged enough," he would say, "but that we must strive to choke it still more with misérables, confined in white deal with tin-tacks, and shovelled into the earth at an expense to the good city of Paris of eight livres seven sols? And these émeutes, these riots, which, in my capacity as a member of the civic guard, I have the honour to assist in quelling. Dites-moi donc un peu, of what good is it shooting and bayoneting all these deluded artisans and half-starved va nu-pieds? It is nobody's business to bury them decently, and after cumbering your registry for a time, good papa, what is there for them but a pit filled with quick lime? It is inconceivable. Poor people ought not to die. They should go away somehow, or, at least, they should save the administration the trouble of burying them at a tariff which I have no hesitation in affirming to be indecently and absurdly low. Why is there not a Ganges into which the corpses of ces hommes de rien du tout could be thrown, or a funeral pyre whereon their bodies could be incinerated? For such a ceremony, performed en masse, the Pompes Funèbres could, perhaps, display a taste and a luxury from the use of which, in indivi-

dual cases, it is debarred." This was Monsieur Philibert's grand manner. There was no harm in him, however. He was one of the mildest and most placable of men. He was a widower, and his wife had once kept a baby-linen warehouse : what time, ere he himself had gone into the undertaking business, Phillibert had not disdained to hold a senior clerkship in a Bureau de Nourrices : an agency office for wet-nurses.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXIT FRANCIS BLUNT, ESQUIRE.

GOOD papa—it is useless to trouble you with his surname: you would forget it; you have so many names to think of; he appears but for a moment on the stage, and it is sufficient, surely, that he was little Amanda's father, and the guardian of the Edifice on the banks of the Seine—good papa, who was lank and slim, quite of the old school, and whose scanty hair was not innocent of a slight suspicion of powder, sat down with Monsieur Philibert to breakfast. The mightier beefsteak, the more succulent omelette, the stronger red wine, were placed before them. They were helped bountifully, and they ate plentifully. Philibert especially, enjoyed the good things of this life with a gusto which, to the spectator, was well-nigh

ravishing. The meat and drink seemed to do him so much good. He a vampire! He a ghoul! He a croque-mort! He seemed a plump-legged and abdominous cherub rather, in spotless linen and a massive watch-chain, feeding on ambrosia, which, as corpulent cherubs must eat, had been solidified for his especial use and benefit. He was a charming man, and talked as charmingly as he refected himself generously.

"Full, good papa?" he asked, when he had made an end of filling and emptying his own mouth.

"Empty as the mouth of a cannon at the Invalides, when there are no victories to fire salutes for," replied the guardian. "Everything is as bare, *là-bas*, as the palm of my hand. The *Hôtel des Trépassés* has not had a lodger for three days."

"*Hôtel des Trépassés*—good, very good," murmured Philibert. "You have a pleasant wit, good papa: a right pleasant wit. A little more Beaune, if you please. Thank you. It makes one quite chirrup, that little red wine. But business is usually slack at this time of the year, is it not so, papa? In the lively month of June, your heart-broken *grisette* does not think of charcoal, and hates the sight of a brazier: it is so warm. And then your bankrupt student, your discontented Faust. He is not quite so ready to have done with the great problem when the schools are about

breaking up, and he is going home for the holidays."

"Ma foi! I'm sure I don't know. The seasons don't make so very much difference to us. Bon an, mal an, we have always a fair average of lodgers, winter and summer. It is only the English who make of November a special month for the settlement of their little accounts with Fate."

"Ah! those English. A strange, perverse, intractable race. Hopelessly eccentric are those sons of Albion. They tell me there is no Administration of the Pompes Funèbres in that brumous country, and that their proud and phlegmatic aristocracy, carrying their hereditary spleen even beyond the tomb, have lately taken it into their heads to be buried without the slightest state or ceremony. The morose insularies! Still, do I hear that Monsieur Thiers is making Milord Palmerston listen to reason as to the grand affair—the rendition of the sacred ashes of the Emperor."

"You are growing cracked with your Emperor and his sacred ashes, mon gros," the guardian, with good-humoured petulance, observed. You ask me one question, and then you fly off at a tangent to that eternal St. Helena. It is disrespectful to the Order of Things. It is flying in the face of the dynasty of July."

"Pardon, good papa. Patriotism is, I trust,

not incompatible with veneration for the great deeds of times past, and for him the immortal hero. But you were saying——”

“I was saying that between November and June no very great disparity in the number of my lodgers was perceptible. With commendable regularity they continue to patronise the hôtel pretty well all the year round. Our present emptiness, for example, is almost unprecedented. People must be very happy, or the world very peaceable, or the Chapter of Accidents well-nigh exhausted, to account for it.”

“It is certainly curious.”

“It is more than curious, it is vexatious,” good papa, rubbing his ear with some irritation, resumed. “Our usual sources of supply seem to have failed us lately. It is June, certainly, but then don’t people go down to St. Cloud, spend their employers’ money in reckless dissipation, and cut their throats through remorse next morning? Don’t young men hire boats at Asnières in a state of inebriety, capsize their embarkations in a tipsy attempt to row, and get drowned? Are there no lovers’ quarrels at Fontenay-aux-Roses, resulting in the customary laudanum, or the usual and inexpensive branch of a tree? Where is our mid-summer harvest from the Bois de Vincennes? Where are our returns from the Forêt de Fontainebleau? And the Palais Royal, and Frascati’s

—what has become of them? Have half the world been betting on the black, and the other half on the red, and have both red and black turned up alternately, so that both have won? It is incomprehensible. And the assassinations? Is the Cité pulled down? Are there no more bandits in the Rue aux Fèves, no more liberated convicts on the Quai de Billy, no more night-prowlers at the outer barriers? And misery! misery that always exists, that always brings its quota of lodgers to the hôtel. *Ma parole d'honneur, je n'y vois guère.*"

And so the gossips went on. The women-folk had withdrawn to a window, and softly chatting among themselves, were watching the ever-changing panorama on the river shores beneath. Philibert was telling the guardian of a grand funeral which took place in the reign of Louis the Eighteenth—a funeral on a raw, cold November day—a day so cold, so raw, that three personages, eminent in French history, standing round the open grave, caught cold, and caught their deaths, too; for they all expired in less than three months afterwards.

"Let me see," prattled Philibert, counting on his fingers; "there was Monsieur Marchangy, he whom Béranger—what a funeral the great poet will have!—castigated so mercilessly *dans le temps*, ever so long ago. Then there was that distinguished ornament to the bar, Monsieur Robert de Saint-Vincent. And, finally, there was Brillat-Savarin

—Savarin the unequalled, the incomparable, the illustrious gastronomical philosopher who——”

“A-a-h!” Lily gave a little scream and ran back, trembling like a frightened fawn, from the window. Amanda followed her, and caught her hand to calm her. Amanda was disturbed by her friend’s agitation, but she was not terrified. She had looked from that window too often and too long. Madame Thomas remained immovable: her nose glued, seemingly, to the pane.

“What is it, my child?” cried the guardian, starting up in some alarm.

“What is it, Ma’amselle Amanda?” the master of the ceremonies echoed. “Perhaps,” he continued, mentally, “my eloquence has touched the sympathies of la petite Anglaise. They are very sentimental, these charming misses. Would that the effect the humble Philibert may have made upon her would react on the stony heart of Amanda. Oh! my Amanda, my Amandine!” Monsieur Philibert, be it remembered, was a widower, and more than middle-aged; but he had not yet abandoned all hopes of forming a second matrimonial alliance. A pretty, amiable, well-to-do partner, able to conduct during his absence on official business a genteel mourning establishment, a maison de deuil, on the Boulevard des Capucines: this was his dream of bliss.

“It is nothing, it is nothing, papa,” Amanda

hastened to reply to her father's query; "or, rather, it is a mere trifle, a bagatelle; but Ma'am-selle Lily is not used to such sights, and it has frightened her. It is your affair. C'est quelqu'un qu'on porte ici—it is SOMEBODY who is coming, my papa."

Lily had sunk into a chair, and had covered her face with her hands, and was sobbing without tears. The poor little thing was too frightened to cry.

"Is it gone?" she asked, as Amanda bent over her to soothe her.

"You silly little soul, there is nothing to be alarmed at. I live in the midst of such things, and they never trouble me. Papa takes care of all that sort of thing."

Madame Thomas, with her nose to the pane, gave a low prolonged sound, like "haough." Madame Thomas was keen scented; she sniffed the lodger from afar off.

The two men went up and stood beside her. And then they beheld, beneath them, that of which Lily had caught but a distant glimpse.

First, there was a crowd. Two soldiers recently conscripted, who had just joined the garrison of Paris, with gaby faces, ill-cut hair, forage-caps yet void of the military manner of setting on, and an inch of shirt visible between the hems of their jackets and the waistbands of their pantaloons.

One was munching an apple, and the other was smoking a halfpenny cigar, of course. To them followed a water-carrier, and a cook with her basket full of green-stuff, who had just partaken of a morning sip with the Aquarius aforesaid; a flock of ragged boys in blouses, coming home from a primary school, who were swinging their satchels, and shrilly interchanging criticisms upon Somebody's appearance and odour—especially upon his odour; half a dozen workmen, with pipes in their mouths; and an old gentleman with a straw hat, spectacles, and a blue gingham umbrella, who may have been a member of the Institute, a retired banker, a spy of the police, or a begging-letter writer taking an airing, but who, with his hat, his spectacles, and his umbrella, had formed an integral portion of similar crowds any time these fifty years: at the Federal Pact ceremonial in the Champ de Mars, at the Feast of the Goddess of Reason, at the whipping of Théroigne de Mircourt, at the execution of Robespierre, at the cannonade of the Eighteenth Brumaire, at the explosion of the first Infernal Machine, at the Coronation of Napoleon, at the entry of the Allies into Paris in 'fourteen, at the Champ de Mai in 'fifteen, at the removal of the Horses of St. Mark from the Arch of the Carrousel, at the assassination of the Duke of Berry, at the barricades of July, at the Hôtel de Ville when Jacques Lafayette showed the Duke

of Orleans to the mob as "the best of republics," at the riots during the cholera year 'thirty-three, at the funeral of General Lamarque, and the bloody conflict in the Rue de la Tixeranderie, at the raising of the Obelisk of the Luxor, and the interment of the patriots of July beneath the Column of the Place de la Bastille. He had made one in all these famous crowds, this tranquil old man in the straw hat, and he always had a book under his arm, just purchased for seventy-five centimes on the Quai Voltaire. He had seemingly never changed save in the article of a pigtail, which he wore during the Republic and the Empire, and had cut off soon after the Second Restoration.

This was the crowd. Stay: the gentleman who shaved poodles, and attended to cats on the Pont Neuf, had left his stall in the care of an old woman, and run up just to see what was going on. His temporary absence from duty was perhaps explanatory of that "*Va en ville*" which, on his sign-boards, have in our time often mystified us. Stay, once more. Two or three sergents de ville, their swords drawn, kept close to the object which was the nucleus of the throng, and had drawn it together. Finally, in the rear of the procession—for it was a mobile crowd, and in penny-a-lining diction might have been called a *cortége*—there followed leisurely three well-dressed men, who had breakfasted together that morning, and, taking a

walk afterwards for recreation, had fallen in with something of the nature of a spectacle, or show, and were determined to follow it to the end.

That end was now near. It was the door of the Edifice. Philibert drew up the window, and could look right down upon the Something that was being borne along in the midst of the gazers and the schoolboy critics. Four men of the water-side order—an order which differs very slightly from one end of the world to the other—were carrying, by means of straps yoked over their brawny shoulders, a kind of stretcher or bier. On it, lay Something about six feet long. It was entirely covered with some coarse sacking, from which, as it swayed along, water dripped pretty freely on the sunny June pavement. A moment's glance at this Something beneath the sacking was sufficient to tell you that what lay there had been human, and was dead.

"A lodger at last," quoth the guardian, quietly. "I must go down and see to his toilette. Will you be one of us, mon gros? Amanda, my angel, thou wilt amuse Ma'amselle Lily until I return."

Madame Thomas would have dearly liked to join the party bound for the basement, but lacking an invitation, was forced to content herself with assisting in the consolation of Lily.

The task was not a very difficult one. The girl soon forgot the ugly object whose real import she

had by intuition guessed. Then Amanda played and sang to her again; and, what with the warbling of the birds and the lively prattle of her companions, she soon grew comparatively cheerful.

Not so cheerful, perhaps, as those below who were making the lodger's toilette, and whistling over their task.

It was a paradoxical toilette, for, in order to dress him, they undressed him, and left him stark. Although he had had lately a great deal more water than was good for him—the excess of fluid had indeed been a proximate cause of his decease—they had no sooner gotten him on to his bed of rest, than they set more water to trickle over him. It is true that to keep him sweet, they mingled some chloride of lime with the water. He had need to be kept sweet, this lodger, for he was drowned as well as dead.

The crowd, who had been excluded from the Edifice for half an hour after the admission of the lodger with his bearers, and who had grown as impatient as any other crowd—say that waiting for admission to the pit of a theatre—would under similar circumstances: the crowd had at last ingress allowed it. The sight-seers poured in and saw the show. They came straggling out by twos and threes soon afterwards. Their criticisms on the spectacle were various. The cook said that he must have been a fine-looking man—*bel homme*;

the schoolboys were of course delighted. One of the soldiers when he came out was sick. He said that it was the cigar which made him feel unwell. The audience were in the main agreed that the dead man had not been in the Seine many hours ; that he had been legitimately drowned and not murdered—notwithstanding an ugly gash on his right shoulder : which the connoisseurs averred had been done with the boat-hook with which he had been fished up ; and that he was a foreigner.

Of the three well-dressed men who had followed the crowd at their leisure, only one had at first entered the Edifice. It was Jean Baptiste Constant.

Rataplan had flatly refused to go in. He had no taste for such horrors, he said.

Franz Stimm promised to enter, on receiving a report from Constant as to the appearance of the dead. "I likes a ansom gorps," said the courier. "It is schrecklich schön, muy grazioso ; but ven he is vets and wounds, and zmells bad, he makes mine stomjacks veel queer."

So J. B. Constant went in alone.

He rushed out a minute afterwards with a livid face.

"Come in, both of you !" he cried. "As I live, I have found him—my old master—the child's father—Mr. Blunt !"

Francis Blunt, Esquire, stiff and stark, his soaked

and shabby clothes hanging on a peg behind him, lay, indeed, on a cold slab in the MORGUE of Paris.

So there is death in life, and life in death ; and the daughter was alive above, while the father was dead below ; and both should reckon nothing of their meeting or their parting, till all meet to part no more.

CHAPTER XIX.

LILY RUNS AWAY.

THERE was no other way out of it. She loved, wholly and to desperation, and her love was hopeless. She felt that she must either die or go. She was too young, too pure to think of killing herself. Of hard and bitter trials the poor child had surely had enough in her short and troublous career, and over and over again she had fancied that she was weary of life, and would be glad to be quit of it, for good and all, and at rest. But there is a thing called Hope, the which, although we pretend or imagine ourselves to be sunk in irremediable despair, is still latent in the human breast. Although the bed of the stream may be dry in the parched and arid season, the mountain springs are never choked, and in time the old channel will be flooded,

and the river will rise and reach the ocean. Although she suffered and wept very sorely, within her was still that elasticity and rebounding power which, under Heaven, might give her strength to endure anguish more terrible than any she had yet felt. Hope is never dead until the mind is utterly unable to suggest an alternative. Then you go mad and slay yourself.

Her passion, it became sadly evident, was known to, or at least vehemently suspected, by Madame de Kergolay. By degrees the affectionate kindness with which the good old lady was wont to treat her protégée dwindled down to a cold and ceremonious tolerance of her presence. She was addressed as "Mademoiselle," and as "you," instead of "little darling," "little angel," a hundred other terms of endearment, and "thou." If she were absent for an hour no inquiries were made as to where she had been. She was allowed to remain in her chamber for half a day together, unasked for and unnoticed. Complete and contemptuous indifference on the part of her patroness seemed to set in. She was asked to perform no little tasks, to move no cushions, to give her opinion on no needlework. Her own growing proficiency in the accomplishments which had been taught her elicited no admiration from her for whose praise Lily fondly looked, and, until lately, had looked alone.

One day—it was the first for a very long time

—the old lady sent for her, and in acid and querulous tones gave her that which women, among themselves, call “a good talking to,” that which was half a reprimand and half an attempt to extort a confession. Madame de Kergolay made no direct accusation against Lily, but her doubts, her innuendoes, her denunciations of an implied ingratitude, heartlessness, and hypocrisy, were a hundred times more painful to the girl than if she had brought a specific indictment against her, and charged her with the commission of deliberate crime. She told her how mortifying it was for the aged to find their efforts on behalf of the young requited by treachery and deceit. She delivered cutting apophthegms on the ease with which young persons thought they could delude and hoodwink their elders; she delivered sardonic apologues as to certain vipers which had been warmed in compassionate bosoms, and how much sharper than a serpent’s tooth it was to have a thankless child, even when it happened that the child in question was an adopted one. And a good deal more did she expatiate on the reverence and loyalty that were due from inferiors towards those who, although they might have been deprived by Providence in its wisdom of their worldly possessions, were still immeasurably and irrevocably above them.

A dozen times during this harangue was Lily on the point of casting herself at the old lady’s

feet, of clinging to her dress, of embracing her, of avowing her love, of admitting that it was rash, mad, wicked, unreciprocated, of adjuring her by the memory of all the loving kindness she had hitherto experienced, to forgive her and to bless her, and to permit her to retire from her presence and her house, to pray for her benefactress, no longer petted and fondled by her, but still unproved and undiscarded. This was not to be. So soon as words of admission began to quiver on Lily's lips, the old lady would tell her, with freezing dignity, that she had no wish to pry into her secrets, that she doubtless knew her own affairs best, that she must be the best judge under the circumstances as to what was due to society, to those who had befriended her, and to herself; that she would not presume to offer any counsel to so high and mighty a personage as mademoiselle, whom she had then the honour to address: and that, after all, she must know a great deal more about the world and its ways than those who were three, if not four times her age. "You belong to a rising and precocious generation, mademoiselle," the ancient dame concluded, with bitter and condescending irony; "to a generation which has made up its mind to outrage and to insult all that persons of maturer age deem worthy of preservation and respect: to a generation which has cast such bagatelles as truth, gratitude, honesty, and

maidenly modesty to the four winds of heaven. Allez ! I am not deceived. I am only a little disappointed. I have only lost another of the few and most fondly cherished illusions which remained between me and my grave."

Lily saw that in her present temper it was useless to argue with one who, rightly or wrongly, had evidently a preconceived prejudice against her, and that one of the strongest nature. In very humble and submissive accents she asked, as she was *Quite Alone* and friendless, what were madame's intentions towards her as regarded the future. "I don't know much," added Lily, plaintively; "but if madame thinks me strong enough, I am ready to go out as a governess." Herein Lily indulged in a vague reminiscence of the Pension Marcassin, and of the mission to which, according to Miss Marygold, all young girls who had the misfortune to be educated and poor were doomed.

"Ma foi," responded Madame de Kergolay, shrugging her shoulders, half in indifference and half in embarrassment, "I scarcely know. I suppose I must speak to cet abbé malencontreux, that inopportune ecclesiastic who brought you here. Yes; I must speak to him; et puis on verra. As for assuming the functions of a governess at your immature age—ne vous en déplaie pas le mot—and with the crude and imperfect, if not vicious, education you have already acquired, the idea

strikes me as being utterly preposterous and absurd. Nor, although I do not doubt your great quickness and aptitude for learning anything to which you choose to apply your mind, do I think you at all qualified, with your previous irregular training, to instil sentiments of piety and morality into the young."

Everything and everybody was seemingly against our unhappy Lily. "What, then, do you wish me to do, madame?" she continued, in a subdued tone.

"I repeat, we shall see. Something may turn up. Were you of a different creed, or were your mind differently constituted, it might be expedient for a young and destitute person for whom generous individuals were willing to make a small dotation, to take the vows and seek the retirement of a convent; the dames of St. Vincent de Paul would be happy to receive any novice of my recommendation for a sum of three thousand francs once paid. But, to speak frankly, I should hesitate to consign to a cloister a young lady possessing so very sprightly a disposition."

"I can sew, I can be a servant," urged poor Lily, dolorously.

"Et faire la cuisine par-dessus le marché, et faire danser l'anse du panier," Madame de Kergolay, with grim sarcasm, went on. "O, I have very little doubt of the variety of your talents, even for

domestic service. You would make an admirable soubrette in one of M. de Marivaux's comedies—one of those astute chambermaids who are the life and soul of an intrigue, and are not indisposed occasionally to a little flirtation with M. le Marquis."

Poor Lily began to sob as though her heart would break. She felt, in all intensity, the contempt and dislike expressed in these words. She felt that she was being treated with cruelty and injustice, but she had not the courage indignantly to justify herself.

Madame de Kergolay seemed more wearied than touched by the girl's grief. "There," she said, waving her hand as Lily's sobs grew more passionate, "we can dispense with these miaulements. M. de Buffon has told us all about crocodiles and their tears. I am too nervous, and too much of an invalid, to be able to support any scenes. I shall be obliged to you to give me no theatrical tirades, and to leave the room."

Burying her face in her handkerchief, and endeavouring, but in vain, to suppress her sobs, Lily obeyed the command, and turned to go.

"You will not, if you please, approach me again," continued the inexorable old lady, "until you are sent for. Your presence, in sight of recent events, is productive of anything but pleasurable sensations. M. l'Abbé and I will confer as to your

future, and in due time you will be made acquainted with our decision. Your meals will be served to you in your own chamber. Justice and consideration—much more than you have been willing to extend to others—will be dealt out to you. Affection and indulgence you can no longer expect. Go, misguided child.”

Lily’s trembling hand was on the lock of the door, her foot was on the threshold to depart, when she heard once more the old lady’s voice.

“One moment. Let me give you a word of counsel. Any little arrangements you may have made for carrying on a most culpable intrigue have been frustrated. M. Edgar Greyfaunt has left for England.”

It was the first time, in all her reproachful speeches, that she had mentioned her grand-nephew’s name. It was the first time that she had directly made allusion to any connexion between Edgar and the cause of her anger. The hint was quite enough for Lily.

She went forth from the presence of the kind heart which had melted for her, a poor, destitute, friendless stranger, and which now seemed turned to marble. What had she done? Ah! her heart told her too well, and with damning precision. She had dared to love. She had presumed to look up from her lowly station to the patrician kinsman of her benefactress. The eagle may look at the

sun, but not the worm. Her upturned gaze had been met by a withering frown. She had been stricken down and trampled under foot. It was all over now. She was discovered, detected, degraded. Madame de Kergolay regarded her as a monster of ingratitude. The abbé would but reflect his patroness's opinion. The very servants would look askance upon her as one proscribed and in disgrace. And Edgar? Edgar, ah misery! was gone.

There was nothing left for her but to go too. Whither she knew not. She had but a few francs in her pocket; she dared not take with her any considerable portion of her wardrobe; besides, it was supplied to her by Madame de Kergolay, and was not hers to take. She had no friends; none, at least, to whom she would dare to appeal in her extremity. Amanda at the Morgue was barely an acquaintance. She dared not go to that dreadful place again. There was, it was true, the Pension Marcassin. Should she go there, confront the ogress in black velvet who had made her girlhood miserable, and entreat her, even on her knees, to take her back again, were it even as a common drudge to sweep and scrub the class-rooms out? But how would the ogress receive her? Would she not spurn her, or at best dismiss her with derision? And then, was not the abbé in constant communication with the Marcassin, and would not

her retreat be known? She wanted to go away somewhere and hide her head. She wanted to be heard of no more by those who once loved her, but now looked upon her with aversion and disdain. She wanted to be Quite Alone.

If she could only find the Marygold! But where was she to seek for her, and what assistance could she expect from her even if she found her? No, she would go to England, she thought. It would not cost much to reach England. She would ask where Stockwell was, and endeavour to find out the Bunnycastle. She would seek for Cutwig and Co.; nay, with a kind of blush she thought that she might meet the tall gentleman who had met her at the Greenwich dinner when she was a child, and had been kind to her.

But what if she should fall into the hands of the strange and imperious lady who had brought her from beyond the sea! Well, she had borne that before, and might bear it again. It could scarcely be worse than the misery she was now enduring.

To England, then. But how? She was as ignorant of the means by which the desired land was to be reached as any child of five years old could be, nor did she venture to ask any one around her for information. She knew nothing of the formalities requisite to procure a passport even for inland travelling, or how she was to reach

the coast, or get on board ship. She would ask, she thought, when she had taken to flight, and was beyond pursuit. Pursuit! Would any one deem it worth his while to pursue so forlorn and deserted a little maiden as she was? At all events, she would seek her way, and, if necessary, beg it. Perhaps it would end in her dying of hunger and cold like the Children in the Wood; and where were the Robin Redbreasts who would cover her with leaves?

Nineteen francs and seventeen centimes: that was the sum total of her resources: the residue of Madame de Kergolay's last gift of pocket-money. How sorry she was, now, that she had bought those little lawn cuffs and kerchief at "*Le Chat qui pelote*" in the Rue St. Denis. But she was happy then, and had not been scolded—ah! so cruelly—and did not dream of running away. Was her contemplated flight wrong? Ay, surely it was; both wicked and self-willed, and hard-hearted, and ungrateful. But what was she to do? Who was to advise, to censure, to dissuade her? She had no friends, and she was *Quite Alone*.

Stay! She had a golden locket which Madame de Kergolay had given her. It was encircled, too, with small diamonds, and contained a lock of hair of the Martyr King—of Louis the Sixteenth. She would be obliged to sell that if her money

were insufficient to take her to England. There were plenty of shops on the quays, where they advertised in the windows to buy old gold, and silver, and diamonds, in any quantity and at good prices. Was it not base, mean, almost felonious, to sell the pretty trinket which she whom Lily loved best in the world had given her? Truly her conscience told her it was. But she had no hope, no means, save in the disposal of that locket. Perhaps the dealer would be merciful enough to keep it for her till she could earn enough money to buy it back again, and then she would return it to Madame de Kergolay. She tormented herself with all kinds of blundering sophistry, and, had she been a professed logician, she could not have arrived at last at more erroneous conclusions. At all events, the locket had been given to her. Was it not her own? She tried to persuade herself that it was. To a certain extent, it might have been; but never, surely, to use as a basis for running away. Well, God forgive her her naughtiness, she thought desperately. But she must sell the locket.

And why to England, since she knew that Edgar Greyfaunt had gone thither? Should not prudence, pride, that "maidenly modesty," her want of which the cruel Madame de Kergolay had taunted her with, deter her from following to a strange land the man she loved, but who could not

care five centimes for her? Again sophistry came to her aid. She was not following him. England was a very large place. There was surely room enough there for two. Besides, had she not a right in England? Was she not of English birth? Had she not passed a portion of her childhood there? Might she not find friends in England? Friends! A fresh burst of sobs broke from her, as she remembered how utterly friendless and alone she was.

All this and much more she thought of on her way to the little bedroom where she had once been so happy. She had scarcely the heart to enter it again, or to open the casement and look out upon the housetop, and see the blue smoke wreathing upwards, and listen to the jangling piano, and the voice of Jules quarrelling with Seraphine his wife. She had nothing more to do with Paris. Its sights and sounds were to be henceforth estranged from her. For an hour or more she sat on the stairs outside her door, her face in her hands, her tears mingling with her thoughts, her sense of thorough loneliness and misery with both. And then she went into her chamber, and cast herself on the bed, and lay there thinking and sobbing till it was dark.

They brought her up some dinner in due season; but the ancient servitor, acting probably under instructions, only knocked at the door, and telling

her in a harsh voice that her repast was served, left it there on a tray, and retired. He came up again in an hour's time, found that the viands had not been touched, and took the tray away again without a word.

"Let her starve herself if she chooses," the unbending old lady down stairs said, when the ancient servant, whose heart was bleeding, somehow, for Lily, represented these facts to his mistress. "It is a voluntary act on her part. She is not locked in. The food was placed at her door, and she was duly informed of its being there."

"But suppose mademoiselle becomes ill—falls into a languor—into syncope, in a word—madame would be very sorry."

"Madame would be nothing whatever of the kind," the old lady retorted, sharply. "Hold your tongue. You presume upon my indulgence, and the privilege of long service. Are you, too, about to turn on me—ungrateful?"

"Heaven forbid, madame."

"It would seem like it. As for her starving herself, or falling ill, there is no danger of that. I tell you, that it is only her temper. Mere sulkiness and obstinacy. This is the way with girls of the present generation. When I was at the convent, if I had behaved so, the good sisters would have given me the discipline. There, let me hear no more of this ungrateful and designing serpent.

She will be hungry enough to-morrow morning, I will warrant."

What dreadful crime had Lily committed that she could turn to such rancorous severity a nature which she had hitherto found soft, and yielding, and tender? Alas, her sin was unpardonable: it was the sin against pride and haughtiness. Madame de Kergolay could have excused her almost everything; but she could not forgive her for being human.

Lily scarcely slept a wink that night—the last she was resolved to pass in the place which had been a home, and a happy home to her. She did not undress, but lay on the bed, tossing and tumbling restlessly. She rose, so soon as it was daylight, almost in a fever. She was full of pulses. Her blood beat the drum in her temples, her eyes, her ears, her wrists, her very gums, and the root of her hot tongue. She drank a long draught of cold water, which only seemed to render her more thirsty, and laved her hands and face in the fluid which still failed to cool her. Looking at herself in the glass she was terrified to see how swollen and inflamed her eyes looked, how sunken were her cheeks, with a hectic spot on each bone. She wanted rest, consolation, nourishment, or bleeding, it might be; but she could stay for none of these. A hundred clanging voices kept shouting out to her

that there was no other way but this, and that she must run away.

The wretched little woman had made up her mind to fly. With her childhood, her girlhood, she seemed to have done for ever. She was a grown-up Pariah and outcast now—an adult vagabond and wanderer upon the face of the earth. God help her; but there was no one else to render a hand of succour to her. She was afraid to put up any linen, any change of dress, or even so much as an additional shawl. She went forth in her usual walking-dress and simple bonnet, and nought else, save her beauty and her innocence—for though she was constrained to sell that locket she *was* innocent—to cover her.

But before she went away she knelt down, and prayed Heaven earnestly and tearfully to bless the woman—her and her household—who had had mercy upon her, a solitary and helpless wayfarer. She prayed for the good clergyman who had brought her hither, at once the cause of her great happiness and her greater sorrow. And, finally, she prayed to be forgiven the deed she was about to do.

Then she rose up, and hastily thrust beneath the wings of her bonnet the masses of soft brown hair she had been wont to arrange each morning with such dainty neatness. Then, sitting down at the little table where, with joy and contentment, she

had been used to study, she penned a few hasty lines to Madame de Kergolay. She said that she would return no more, and that it was useless to seek for her: that she was not so wicked as to meditate suicide, and that she trusted in God to watch over and protect her. She confessed that she had been foolish, that she had been ungrateful, that she had been mad, in daring to love a certain person, but with passionate disclaimers she denied having been treacherous or hypocritical. And, finally, she implored Madame de Kergolay to forgive her, and to think of her not as she was, but as she had been.

It was a glorious summer morning, and the sun was literally pouring into the room, drenching every object with gold. Lily thought of that sunny morning she had sat on the carpet at Rhododendron House, and said "I won't," to Miss Barbara Bunnycastle. Ah! how long ago that was. She was quite a little child then, though so unhappy. And now she was a woman, and unhappier than ever.

Brighter shone the sun, promising a glorious day. It was the twenty-seventh of July.

CHAPTER XX.

A DEAD AND GONE FESTIVAL.

WHEN poor little Lily reached the foot of the common staircase, she found nobody there but the portress, who was engaged in a more or less amicable discussion with the Auvergnat in a blouse, who, with the assistance of a donkey, a cart, and several cans, was in the habit of bringing round the milk to that particular street. She had just informed the Auvergnat that he was a fichue bête; to which he had responded, that she the portress was a vieille sorcière, who was born in the time of Pharamond, and had not invented gunpowder. Thereupon Madame la Concierge was about making an assault upon the uncivil milkseller with her broom; but at this conjuncture the postman fortunately entered the lodge with

the early batch of letters, and for ten minutes or so the portress had quite enough to do in examining the superscriptions, peeping between the interstices of the envelopes, and smelling the seals of the missives brought by the Mercury of the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau.

"Pouah! comme ça pue le musc," she said, nosing one delicate-looking billet. "Pink paper, too, satiné! Allons donc! And a hand like a spider out for a promenade, and all that for the soi-disant viscomte, who has his varnished boots mended, and owes two terms to our proprietor. Ah, ah, my brave, if you don't have warning before another month is over your head, my name is not Cornélie Desgracq. Il pleuvra des congés dans cette maison. Why, how now, ma petite; whither are you bound so early?"

This was to Lily, who had timidly asked for the cordon.

"I am going for a walk—I am going to take a bath."

Lily faltered. It is certain that nobody yet ever did anything wrong in this world without having to tell one or more falsehoods to commence with. The embryo murderer has to tell a lie about the pistol or dagger, the would-be suicide about the poison he purchases. The ways down which the bad ship Wickedness slides to a shoreless ocean must be greased with lies. Lily's criminality was of no very deep dye; yet you see she

had been unable to stir a pace in her expedition without telling a fib.

"There you are, then," said the portress, pulling the desired check-string. "Go thy ways, and a bright good morning to thee. I like that petite ma'amselle," she continued, musing as the girl slipped through the portal; "she gives herself no airs, and, all things considered, is not far from being pretty. Cela a un petit air de rien du tout, qui n'est pas mal. Going to have a bath, was she? Well, it's hot enough. I wouldn't mind one myself if that pot-au-feu did not demand my attention." Good old portress! Since twenty years had she been pre-occupied by that same pot-au-feu, perpetually simmering. "Mais dites moi donc un peu, what on earth makes all the girls in our time so very anxious to take baths? Does that scélérat Cupidon keep the baths of La Samaritaine, I should like to know? When I was a girl, we were not so fond of bathing."

And Madame la Concierge, having concluded her examination of the postal delivery, proceeded to skim her pot-au-feu.

Lily went out into the great desert: to her, quite trackless, and barren of oases. She had cast her skin as it were. She had done with her old friends, her old habits, the old-new name with which they had invested her. She was now only Lily, and Quite Alone.

Still, though she was solitary among a crowd of

thousands, and could not hope, between sunrise and sundown, to light upon one friendly human face she knew; though she was at sea, in a frail cockboat, without mast or rudder or pilot in a howling ocean, stretching she knew not whither; though she had scarcely the means of obtaining that night's shelter, or to-morrow's bread, Lily was on business. She was pre-occupied. She had affairs of moment to attend to. There never was, I conceive, any one so idle, short of an idiot, who, if he chose to ask himself the question, could not remember that he had something to do. Lily was quite overburdened with business. She had to get to England: God alone knew how. She was to do something there to earn her living: God alone knew what. Oh! she was a fully-engaged and absorbed young person; but, first of all, there was that locket to be sold. Inexperienced in the ways of the world as she was, she dared not flatter herself that nineteen francs seventeen centimes would take her to London. London! she had scarcely pronounced that word as yet; but it was fully settled in her minor consciousness that she was going to London. Not a Turk in Asia Minor wakes up from his pipe-trance and thinks he should like a tour in Frangistan; not a Lascar coolie ships on board a homeward-bound India-man; not a long-tailed vagabond of Shanghai lays in a stock of rice and dried ducks for a

voyage across the main; not a Genoese beggar-boy is sold by his padrone to grind the organ to the English heretics, but knows, although he may scarcely have mastered the words to say it, that he shall see London.

The locket! The locket! Lily knew that she was about to do a naughty thing, and, desperately as her mind was made up for the deed, she tried to stave off the evil moment of commission for yet a little time longer. Bishop, who murdered the Italian boy, set him to play with his children half an hour before he slew him. He, too, had made up his mind; but he luxuriated in deferring the thing for thirty minutes. We like to put the consummation of our villany off. A convict in a penitentiary told me once, that he counted seven hundred and fifty, neither more nor less, before he took pen in hand to commit the forgery which sent him to penal servitude for twenty years. I knew a man who repaired to an appointment from which his conscience told him sin would follow. As he was biding tryst, a flash of remorse came over him, and, turning a piece of money in his pocket, he vowed that if, when he drew it out, head should be uppermost, he would abandon his intent, and go away before the victim came. He drew forth the money, and head was uppermost;—whereupon the man broke his vow and kept his tryst to the bitter end. The flash of remorse had died away.

So, while Lily knew well that the locket must be sold, her poor little trembling spirit was casting about on every side for a respite, were it even of the briefest, from the inevitable act. She must be quick about it. She knew that; for discovery and pursuit, although not probable, were just barely possible. But oh! for another minute, another half-hour, before she would be forced to confess her unworthiness in her own eyes. Fortuitously, the bright morning air reminded her that she was hungry; and she remembered that she had had no breakfast. Where was such a meal to be obtained? She had walked as yet up one street and down another, not purposeless, but irresolute, and still staving off the evil time. She saw plenty of cafés around her: splendid cafés, all gilding and plate-glass; second-rate cafés; tenth-rate cafés, smelling of smoke, dirty, and generally ill favoured. The large men with beards who were visible in most of these cafés as she peeped through the glazed doors, frightened Lily. There was one specially alarming creature in a fluffy white hat, a great glass screwed into one eye, a twisted chin-tuft like a colossal comma: who, with his hands stuck in the pockets of a pair of tartan trousers so wide at the waist and so narrow at the ankles that they looked like two jars of Scotch snuff, was standing, smoking, on the steps of a coffee-house in the Rue Montmartre. He greeted Lily with a

hideous leer as she passed him, sticking his arms akimbo, and humming something about "La Faridondaine." She blushed and quivered as she hurried away. Oh! she must make haste to get to England. A vague intuition told her that Paris was a very wicked place, and that she was but a lamb in the midst of five hundred thousand wolves.

She saw at last a humble little shop in whose windows were displayed two large bowls full of milk, with a sky-blue basis and a yellow scum on the surface; sundry eggs; a bouquet of faded flowers; a siphon of eau de Seltz; a flap of raw meat with a causeway of bone running through it; several huge white coffee-cups and saucers; and the *Siècle* newspaper of the week before last. From sundry little blue bannerols bearing inscriptions in white letters, Lily learnt that this was a *Crêmerie*; that its sign was *Au bon Marché*; that bifteks, bouillon, coffee, and chocolate were to be had there at all hours, and that meals were even *portés en ville*—carried to the patrons of the establishment at their own residences. Furthermore, there was a tariff of prices which assured Lily as to the capacity of her purse to endure the charges of such a very modest little breakfast as she needed.

She entered the Cheap Creamery, and making known her wants to a brawny Norman wench

with big gold earrings, who had a hoarse voice, the possession of which a corporal in the Chasseurs d'Afrique would not have disdained, and who, when she was called, did not answer "Voilà!" after the fashion of waiters generally, but thundered forth, "Vous y êtes!" Murmuring her brief commands to this formidable servitor, Lily was presently supplied with a big white bowl full of chocolate, and a large piece of bread, the which (the whole costing but eight sous) made no very serious inroad on her stock of ready money.

The place was full of working people; the men, in blouses; the women and girls, in neat white caps or kerchiefs tied round their heads, who were as kindly and courteous in their demeanour as, in the course of many years' wandering up and down the earth, I have generally found working people to be:—in every country save one. That one is not England; but they speak the English language in that one. Lily's opposite neighbours passed the bonjour to her, and helped her to the milk and the sugar without her having to ask for those articles; and one comely little grisette even offered a share of the poached eggs she had ordered. A gentleman who sat opposite to her, who apparently belonged to the baking trade—who wore a monstrous-brimmed felt hat like an umbrella of which the handle had impaled him and the cupola flattened on his head, and who was

powdered from head to foot with flour profusely, but was beautifully clean to look at—reached over to Lily when he had finished his repast, and handed her a copy of that day's *Gazette des Tribunaux*.

"It does not belong to the establishment, mademoiselle," he said. "Their newspapers here are as stale as their bread. You can keep it as long as you like, and give it to the poor when you have done with it. For, if the *Gazette des Tribunaux* doesn't concern the poor, I don't know what does. I have the honour, mademoiselle, to wish you a very good morning."

With which mild witticism the baker bowed, touched the brim of the monstrous hat—he could not for the life of him get it off—and took his departure. He repaired to an adjacent *salon de toilette*, to be shaved, and, if he could only have got that hat off, he would probably, it being a *jour de fête*, have had his hair curled.

Lily was not frightened at the baker, although he was at least two inches taller than the man in the fluffy white hat who had leered at her in the *Rue Montmartre*. She was too sick at heart to smile when he offered her the paper; but she murmured out her thanks, and, persuading herself that it was still very early, and, eager to stave off her business yet for a few minutes longer, she began to read the *Gazette des Tribunaux*.

She had never set eyes on that famous journal before, and its contents, at first, absolutely horrified her. How wicked everybody in Paris must be to be sure! The eight pages of ill-printed matter were crimson with crimes. One-half of the world seemed to be prisoners; and the other half, judges, gendarmes, and executioners. Here was a viscount in the Charente-Inférieure who had poisoned his mother-in-law. A soldier in the garrison of Oran had struck his commanding officer, and was to be shot by sentence of court-martial. Dreadful vol avec effraction in the Avenue de Bondy! Sad case of juvenile depravity at Valéry-sur-Somme! Awful conflagration at Brives-la-Gaillarde! Murder of three children by their mother at Noisy-le-Sec! An infant devoured by a wolf at Vitry-le-Français! Six men drowned at Meaux-en-Brie! An old gentleman aged eighty run over on the Boulevard Beaumarchais, and killed on the spot! Inundations, ravages of small-pox, poisonings of whole families through eating ragoût of mutton with mushrooms, steam-boat explosions, breaking down of suspension-bridges, all over the country! The news from abroad seemed as terrific as the domestic intelligence. They were hanging right and left in England. Everybody in Russia, who had not had the knout, appeared to be on his way to Siberia. The sufferings of the Poles were fearful. The garotte was as busy as a bee in Spain; a new

guillotine had just been imported to the island of Sardinia; three Chinese mandarins, and wearers of the blue button, had been chopped into ten thousand pieces by order of the Emperor of China, while their wives had been glued between two-inch boards, and sawed in halves longitudinally. Lily did not know that, when the editor of the *Gazette des Tribunaux* was short of foreign intelligence, he invented, or served up afresh so much of old news as would suit his purpose, or the somewhat blasé appetite of his readers.

She was about laying down the sheet over which, in mingled horror and uneasy curiosity she had spent some twenty minutes, when a paragraph at the foot of the *Chronique*, or collection of minor Parisian notes, caught her eye. It ran thus :

“UN ANGLAIS À LA MORGUE.—The identity of the body found some days since in the *Filet de St. Cloud*, and in due course transferred to the Morgue, has been established. Affirmation has been made before the commissary of police of the section of the *Hôtel-Dieu*, by the *Sieur Jean Baptiste Constant*, native of *Berne (Suisse)*, proprietor, domiciled at Paris, that the corpse is that of *Sir Francis Blunt*, Esquire, *gentilhomme Anglais*, to whose person he was formerly attached in the capacity of *valet-de-chambre*. This statement has been confirmed by the evidence of the *Sieur Rataplan*, restaurateur, of the quarter of the *Madeleine*; and

papers found in the vestments of the defunct place the truth of their story beyond a doubt. What could have led Sir Blunt to this desperate act—a deliberate suicide being inferred by the authorities—is uncertain; but it appears that he was known as a constant frequenter of the *Salons Frascati*, and losses at the gaming-table may have been the primary cause of this sad catastrophe (*triste événement*). Milord Blunt had formerly been rich to millions, but of late had become much reduced in circumstances. With touching solicitude M. Jean Baptiste Constant has charged himself with the interment of the remains (*dépouilles mortelles*) of this unfortunate son of Albion.”

Lily read this paragraph through, read it again and again, and fell into a dream. The names recorded were unfamiliar to her. She knew nothing of proprietors who were natives of Berne in Switzerland and were domiciled at Paris, of restaurateurs who lived in the quarter of the Madeleine. Sir Francis Blunt, with that thundering addition of “esquire,” who was he? And yet—Jean Baptiste Constant, Rataplan, Blunt,—Rataplan, Blunt, Constant—had she or had she not ever heard those names before? She passed all the simple and sorry incidents in her life in review before her. She strove to remember every place where she had been, every one whom she had known—there were the Bunnycastle: the three sisters, the


old lady, with her sentimental wool-gathering talk, the servants, the discreet apothecary, her prattling, ever complaining schoolmates. Then up came a vision of a gentleman in a cloak, who had spoken to her lazily, but sharply; and a vision of another gentleman, with a glossy black whisker on his cheek, who had held her in his arms, not unkindly. Again started up the image of the fierce and imperious lady, with her temper, her stampings, her frettings, and her scoldings. To her succeeded Cutwig and Co., the cheery foreman, the demure Miss Eldred, the large-mouthed clerk who grinned and ate apples. Was it at the Greenwich dinner she had heard the name of Blunt, or on board the steamer, when the gentleman with the heavy whiskers and the gold-laced cap had given her chocolate? Was the sickly gentleman in the carriage on deck, named Blunt? Had Rataplan's name ever been pronounced at the Pension Marcassin? Did Marygold ever speak of a certain Constant? J. B. Constant — Jean Baptiste Constant — the name, the initials, kept ringing in the ears of her mind. But it was all a dream, and would yield nothing tangible. So soon as, for an instant, she thought she had gotten hold of a form and a substance, they slid away from her as though she had been walking on glass, and all was impalpable. As sometimes in a strain of music, and sometimes in a sigh of the wind, and sometimes in a word, for-



gotten so soon as it was uttered, if uttered indeed it were, Lily fancied that she remembered something—she knew not what, she knew not when, she knew not how;—and then the fancied reminiscence faded away into nothingness and a perplexing blank, in which memory had no place.

Very sadly she rose, folding up, she could scarcely tell why, the copy of the paper, and placing it in her pocket. The dream might come back again, she tried to think, and tell her something more definite. At present she was bound to go on her business. That dreadful locket! Yes; the evil time might be no longer staved off. So, she walked down to the quays that were about the Pont Neuf. It was a wonder she did not meet little Amanda on *her* morning walk, or Monsieur Philibert meditating on the grand doings the Pompes Fuènbres would have when the corpse of the Emperor came home.

There were plenty of goldsmiths' shops on the Quai, plenty expressing on their signs quite a delirious eagerness to purchase gold, silver, and diamonds, at their utmost value. Lily entered the first shop on her way. The gentleman who kept it appeared to deal in all kinds of rags and bones, so to speak, of the precious metals. His counter was heaped with frayed and tarnished epaulettes; with coils of torn and shabby gold and silver lace; with coat-collars, coat-pockets and lappels, decorated with faded embroidery, and ruthlessly torn



from their parent garments; with sword-knots, and satchels, and tassels, and bridal veils with silver spangles, and broken teapots, and mugs crumpled up as though they had been made of paper, and flute-mountings, and the tops of meerschaum pipes, and the lozenge plates from cigar-cases, and the bosses and mouldings from cartouche-boxes, and the stoppers of bottles from dressing-cases: anything you please to mention in the way of gold and silver. In front of the counter was a stout wire grating reaching to the ceiling, and in front of the grating was the dealer in the precious metals himself. He was smoking a halfpenny cigar, and, with the assistance of a pair of tweezers, was holding some loose pearls, which he took from a sheet of letter-paper, up to the light. He was a dealer with a very shock head of red hair, and had a very white pasty face, and very weak watery eyes, and very full, luscious-looking pink lips, and was a Jew.

"I won't buy anything this morning," he cried, as Lily, hesitatingly, entered the shop. "That scoundrel Piffard. He pretends to go to the Orkney Islands for pearls. There's not one of them here worth five francs, *ma parole d'honneur*."

Lily, wincing under this rebuff, was about to withdraw, when he called her back.

"Stop! What is it? What have you got? The *défroque* of a marshal of France, or the sceptre of Charlemagne? I'll buy anything for

the sake of your eyes. I love eyes. I wish I could sell them."

He was such a florid dealer, and such a voluble dealer, and, withal, such a very hungry not to say rapacious-looking dealer, that Lily was more than half-alarmed at the manner in which he accosted her. However, there was no help for it now. She nerved herself to a strong effort, and produced the ill-fated locket. She had previously taken out the hair of the Martyr King, wrapped it in a piece of paper, and put it carefully away in her bosom. At least, she would not sell *that*, she thought.

"And what might you want for this little bit of a toy?" asked the dealer, turning over the locket, as he spoke, with much contempt.

"A hundred francs," answered Lily, at a guess. "You see, sir, there are diamonds outside."

"I know, I know," retorted the dealer, who with avid eyes had taken stock of the whole. "Diamonds! Do you call these little pins' heads diamonds? They're nothing but beads; mere children's playthings. Come: I'll be liberal. I'll give you fifty francs."

Unused to bargaining in any shape, and perfect novice as she was in the marketable value of the precious metals, Lily could not but be conscious that an attempt was being made to swindle her. She humbly represented that the locket must be worth considerably more even than the price she

had put upon it, and that fifty francs was really a sum that she could not think of accepting.

"Where's the hair?" cried the dealer, suddenly opening the locket, and then shutting it with a sharp snap. "Where's the miniature of General Foy, or the tomb of Héloïse and Abelard, or the hair of your well-beloved, that ought to be inside?"

Lily replied that she had removed that which had been inside the locket. It was a relic, and she did not intend to sell it.

"Then I won't buy it at all," snarled the dealer, tossing the locket towards her. "Take back your trumpery, I don't buy empty lockets. Nobody likes to buy 'em; and to break up, it isn't worth a louis."

"Oh, sir——" Lily began to plead, as well as she could for the tears that were rising.

"Take it away. I think you stole it. I got into trouble last time about an empty locket. It belonged to a countess in the Faubourg St. Germain, and her chambermaid had robbed her of it. They menaced me with the commissary. Me! Israel Sarpajou! Get out of the shop, or I'll call the guard."

The meaning of all which was, that M. Israel Sarpajou had been somewhat disappointed that morning in the quality of some loose pearls in which he had invested capital; and, not caring to lay out any more ready money just then, thought

he could indulge in a little cheap luxury by baiting a girl whom he knew to be poor, and guessed to be friendless.

Indignant, and yet alarmed, Lily was hastily leaving the shop of the ill-conditioned dealer, when, in his vapid slobbering voice, he called out,

“Come back, little one. Give me a kiss, and you shall have seventy-five francs for your locket.” But Lily stayed to hear no more, and hurried away as fast as ever she could.

She went into one gold and silver dealer’s shop after another; but, through a kind of fatality, as it seemed, no one would give her anything like a remunerative price for the trinket. One overflowing philanthropist, who was a Christian, offered her twenty-five francs for it; another, who was a wag, advised her to make it up with her young man, and then she would no longer desire to sell the locket which contained his beautiful black hair—ses beaux cheveux noirs. A third was more practical. He was an optician as well as a goldsmith, and wore himself such large polygonal blue goggles as to look like a walking lighthouse. He told Lily that her locket was worth, at the very least, two or three hundred francs—not to melt, but as a work of art—and advised her, instead of selling it, to take it to the nearest bureau of the Mont de Pieté, where they would lend her half its value.

This benevolent counsellor gave her, besides, the address of a commissary priseur—one Monsieur Gallifret, who lived in the Rue Montorgueil. Thither did Lily repair with quickening steps; and very seldom, I will venture to surmise, was the first visit to a pawnbroker's paid so blithely.

Monsieur's office was up a narrow filthy passage, and three pair of stairs. There was a *traiteur's* on the first floor, and a preparatory school on the second; and the mingled odours of soup, scholars, and the bundles of wearing apparel in the pawnbroker's store-closets, were decidedly powerful, but far from pleasant. Monsieur Gallifret was not at home; but his wife was—a snuffy old woman with a red kerchief.

"A hundred francs," said Madame Gallifret, when she had examined the locket.

Lily bowed her head, meaning the gesture as a sign of acquiescence.

"Cent francs, ni plus, ni moins. Do you take it? Est-elle sourde-muette, la petite? Speak out."

"I will take it."

"Bon, what is your name?" went on Madame Gallifret, opening a large thin ledger.

"Lily Floris."

"Drôle de nom! Your profession?"

"*Couturière*." Oh, Lily, how fast one learns to lie.

"Domicile?"

"A hundred and twelve, Boulevard Poissonnière." She was making rapid progress in mendacity; but that locket had to be got rid of.

"Where is your passport?"

"My passport, madame?"

"Yes, your passport, your papers. Don't I speak distinctly?"

"I have none."

"Bien fâchée, then, but we can have nothing to do with you. No business is transacted in this office save with persons provided with papers perfectly en règle."

And once more Lily went forth into the street: the locket still unsold, and even unpawned.

END OF VOL. II.

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